

Second

by Soldier78

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Summary: "A chief needs someone he can trust! A chief needs someone that will support him, treat him as an equal, argue his most questionable solutions and love him." Hiccstrid proposal one-shot. CONTAINS HTTYD2 thingies, whatever they're called. Now a one-shot series!

1. Second

**A/N Okay, I know, I need to be updating The Viking and the Slave and I will get right to that. But this was an idea that was in my head the entire day. It really isn't as good as it was in my head but hey, I tried. So here's a cute Hiccstrid one-shot just for the heck of it. Takes place after HTTYD 2 so if you haven't seen it and hate spoilers, hit the backspace and return when you have done so. There's, okay, I won't say major spoilers but there is spoilers. Anyway, hope you enjoy! **

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Second

It was only six months since the large battle between the two Alphas. Six months since Chief Hiccup Haddock found his mother and lost his dear father. Six months since he took the role of Chief of Berk. Gods and it was a long six months. First, there was the repairs and the solution to food and shelter scarcity. The next had been redesigning routes to get trade incoming and outgoing faster. Third, there was the annual chief summit.

Berk was crawling with foreigners. A feast was held in honor of the visiting chiefs and their heirs. Hiccup had to attend that. He spent that whole night, slowly drinking away at a mug of watered down mead

at his seat in the back of the hall at the table of Chiefs or dancing with chieftains' daughters. Throughout the night, he looked for one friendly face that was present for a couple of hours but then disappeared when chiefs started to throw him to their daughters for a proper dance.

Hiccup was aggravated, there was only one daughter he'd enjoyed a waltz with and that was the Hoffersons' daughter. He was very disappointed when he could no longer find Astrid's unmistakable face. She probably saw him dancing the night away with these strangers. As Chief, he found no chance of slipping out of the hall to pursue his girlfriend. However, when he did, it was so late that he knew Astrid would've been asleep and he hated to disturb her sleep with a lame excuse as this. She had been through a lot as his supporter and now, the one in command of the Dragon Academy and other dragon training-related affairs. Of course, she'd be exhausted.

It was one morning during the summit when he felt something take his heart, twist it around to cause so much pain and then release it. Hiccup later realized that it was his conscience using assault to knock some sense into him.

He was in a meeting with the Meatheads, Bog Burglars and Visithugs. He sat in his chair, processing the argument that the Meathead Chief had thrown onto the table.

"Now that Stoick the Vast is no longer with us," he had began his statement. Hiccup cringed at the careful words of the chief regarding his late father. The Meathead did not falter. "His son had to take over."

Hiccup sighed.

_Thanks for stating the obvious, buddy. _He sarcastically thought. Gods, he really wanted to get the Hel out of there. Take Toothless out for his deserved morning flight. Go find some other island. Snatch Astrid from the Dragon Academy and take her a deserved date. He just wanted to get out of here.

"Therefore, it is time to bring up the issue of marriage." Hiccup sat forward suddenly, eyes widened at the mention. Sure, he sort of had plans already in the making butâ€¦|

"Aye, I propose that Chief Hiccup should marry my daughter, Camicazi." Big-Boobied Bertha offered. Hiccup shook his head. He had played with Camicazi a few times when they were little. She was a brilliant thief and had a wild temper.

"That is a bold offer, Bertha." The Visithug Chief commended.
"However-"

Hiccup tuned out on the rest of the conversation as it was argued of who would be the best suitor for the Hooligan Chief. Hiccup stroked his chin for a moment, pretending to consider these offers when he had to think of a way to let them down gently. He already had someone in mind. Of course, he was convinced that he would spend the rest of his life with Astrid by his side. Very rarely they spoke of their future together, usually in jest at what their children would look like, while they were gazing up at the stars. They would joke what kind of dragons their children would ride and which child would be

able to cleave a tree in two with a throw of an axe. At that time, they both knew they weren't ready to start a family together. Not when they had lands to explore.

However, these chiefs were making valid points about getting married.

"A Chief needs a firm second hand and that can be my Camicazi." Bertha argued to the Visithug chief. "Smart, selfless and dominant."

Astrid was smart, she was cunning in all things battle-related. Not to mention, she was becoming a very excellent dragon trainer. Sure, she has had her moments of foolishness but so has he and they figured out how to patch them up, together. She was also selfless, always there for him when he needed support. He thought back to the first days of him becoming chief and how she took time out of her day to visit him in the Forge or at his house. She'd always ask if her presence was wanted and he always said yes because it was true. He needed her encouragement but most importantly, her company to keep him level-headed as he tried to come up with new solutions for the problems faced that day. As for dominance, he used to think that Astrid was the dominant one in their relationship. She always initiated the affections and always reminded him with a rough punch to keep him in line after he done something crazy or stupid. When they got older, dominance wasn't really much of a thing. Both of them liked to think of themselves as equals. They both initiated affections to each other and they both knocked some sense into each other in some type of form.

"Aye, we aren't looking for dominance, Bertha." The Visithug argued. Hiccup chuckled at the meaningless word. "The chief needs someone proper to give him a male heir to the throne. My daughter-"

If Hiccup was going to marry, it wasn't going to be for that reason. Especially not for that reason. Yes, he wanted children but specifically _male _children. No, he wanted a daughter. A daughter with blonde hair and blue eyes, a spitting image of her mother. He had a wistful, silly smile on his face when he pictured the little girl riding in front of him on Toothless.

"A chief needs someone he can trust!" Hiccup stated suddenly. Eyes looked at him as he rose to his feet. He regarded the chiefs with a firm nod and continued to his argument. "A chief needs someone that will support him, treat him as an equal, argue his most questionable solutions and love him."

That was when his heart turned roughly and expanded suddenly. The realization donned on him and he gave the widest, most confident smile to the perplexed chiefs.

"And I know someone who is absolutely perfect for the job."

* * *

><p>It was early evening and the Chief was found in the back of the Forge. It was a good place to go after a stressful day. He wrote down notes about the day that he could refer back tomorrow when he heard a voice.<p>

"Hiccup?"

He smiled wider than at his proclamation earlier this morning.

"In here, milady!" he shouted. He closed his notebook but not before gazing at the one big notice on the right side of his book. One big word and his heart fluttered every time he saw it. It was time. Astrid opened the curtain and entered the private room. She placed her axe in the corner.

"Iâ€|need my axe sharpened." She told him. "I wasâ€|hoping Gobber was here so you wouldn't have to do it."

Hiccup nodded his head, disappointed that he didn't get a kiss in greeting. She was probably still upset about last night.

"Yeah, he turned in early." Hiccup said, feeling like that awkward fifteen year old again. He even rubbed the back of his neck. Astrid nodded.

"I guess I'll come back tomorrow then-" She said, making her way to the door.

"Where are you going?" he asked. Astrid stopped, her hand just holding the curtain. She looked at him.

"You're busy and I don't want to-"

Hiccup reached for her hand and pulled her to him. She put her axe down again. He boldly beckoned her to sit on his lap. She did so and leaned her back against his chest. Her nose finding a little spot by the shell of his ear. She nuzzled it affectionately. He hummed in pleasure and pressed a kiss to the side of her head.

"I haven't seen you in a while, milady." He spoke in his low, throaty voice. Astrid was quiet for a moment which concerned him. "Astrid?"

"Iâ€|" her eyes were casted onto the floor. "I saw you dancing with all those women last night."

Hiccup pursed his lips, frowned that he had guessed right.

"I tried to find you." He whispered to her, earnestly. "Every time I could, I looked all around for you."

"Hiccup," Astrid sighed. She frowned. "You're chief now andâ€|look, I know that we love each other butâ€|"

Hiccup waited for Astrid to compile her thoughts. His heart twisted in anxiety about her words. She sighed.

"I heard about the meeting this morning," she finally began with. "How the chiefs were discussing your marriage."

Hiccup hummed, sourly.

"Those _men _have no right to decide whom I should marry." He growled but his lips pressed a gentle kiss to her neck. He nuzzled her neck. "Besides, we already have plans milady."

Another long exhale from the blonde.

"I know, but would they really accept it?" Astrid asked. "I mean, you're chief and you'll probably be expected to marry outside of the tribe."

There was a moment of silence again and Astrid stood up. Hiccup had a flash of disappointment across his face but it turned into concern as his girlfriend spoke.

"You'll need someone who can give you heirs." Astrid began to list as she normally would. "Someone who can run a household while you're out there, chiefting. Someone who can be smart, tough and trusted enough to be your second in command."

She had her arms crossed, hugging herself as she did when she felt small and divided. She looked over at Hiccup who looked back up at her with his beautiful, but sad green eyes. She expected an 'I'm sorry' from him and a breakup, she was prepared for this.

Yet, when he rose from his bench, she saw something sparkle in his emerald orbs. It was the opposite of sad and he started to walk towards her.

"I told the chiefs that I would marry someone who supports me," He recalled as he stepped closer to her. Astrid started to back up as if trying to avoid him for some odd reason while she tried to figure out the look in his eyes. "Someone who treats me like an equal."

Astrid was just near the wall. Hiccup still pursued.

"Someone who doesn't let me get away with anything."

Her back finally hit the wall and she grunted in discomfort from the impact. Hiccup had effectively trapped her next to the corner of the room. Her breath hitched as she could feel his breath ghosting her lips.

"Someone who loves me." He whispered. That small but firm voice softened her and made her melt as did the hand that gently wrapped around her chin. His longest finger was just at the corner of her mouth and his thumb stroked her pale skin. Astrid stared at him. He then took the dive and pressed a warm, firm kiss upon her lips. She hummed in response but soon returned the kiss with challenging passion. Her hands fell onto his shoulder but after a few moments of the intensity of the embrace, one of her hands shoved into his hair and raked her fingers through it as they moved their mouths together, in sync. Hiccup's hands fell to her hips as he kissed his girlfriend with the greatest love he had for her.

Even the way they kiss, he knew that this choice was unquestionable. They both fought for dominance but were happy to let it play out. The hand in his hair soothed him while her mouth bit down on his lower lip, causing him moan and give into her until a moment later when he tried to retake the ground again.

Soon, they both had breathe sometime. They pulled apart but not away. Their foreheads were pressed together as they breathed against each other. They were flushed but warmed. Astrid's hand fell from his hair

to the scruff on his jaw. She stroked her thumb against it, absently but also as a loving gesture.

"Astrid," he breathed. He was finally able to talk in full sentences. "I love you."

"I love you too." She answered, equally exhausted but happy. His hand grasped the one at his jaw and he held it to his cheek.

"Marry me."

Astrid looked straight him. Eyes wide. Astrid dreamed of this day a few times and imagined a stuttering Hiccup like when they were fifteen. Yet, as she replayed the kiss in her mind, she was reminded that they weren't fifteen or sixteen anymore. She was approaching her twenty first birthday and was a leading dragon rider and Hiccup was Chief of Berk. Hiccup chuckled.

"I know it's sudden--"

She placed a finger gently on his lips and smiled the most radiant grin Hiccup had ever seen in his life.

"You already know the answer, babe."

The End.

**Please, click that button. **

2. Negotiations

A/n Okay, by somewhat popular request, I have decided to add to my one-shot. Thank you all for your feedback, I never had that many reviews in one day. You guys are amazing! So, in appreciation, I wrote this little oneshot that follows Second. Sort of a filler about what happens afterwards. I make this a series of oneshots depending on the interest. So here's the next oneshot. Enjoy!

**Disclaimer, I own nothing.
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~Soldier78~

Negotiations

Hiccup paced nervously about the floor in his home. Toothless chuffed and rolled his eyes at his twitchy friend. The Night Fury was all curled up by the hearth, tail over his face to drown out the squeaks and clanks of his rider's prosthetic as he walked around like a bumbling Gronkle. From the dining table, his mother chuckled at the edginess written all over her son.

Then came a sharp rapt at the door. Valka spoke for the both of them.

"Come in!"

The door opened to reveal her son's fiancÃ©. She walked right in, amusement written on her face. Valka smiled, she was delighted that

this blonde Viking would become her daughter-in-law.

"Morning, Valka."

"Good morning, Astrid." Valka greeted with a warm grin. Hiccup, who was caught up in his anxiety, turned to see his girlfriend.

"A-Astrid?" Hiccup stammered. Astrid rolled her eyes at him.

"Yes." She said firmly. Hiccup licked his lips.

"Please tell me you aren't having second thoughts." He said, nervousness speaking for him. Astrid raised a brow.

"About what?" She asked, arms crossed. Valka cleared her throat and stood up.

"Pay him no heed, Astrid." The sage mother spoke. Astrid looked at the older woman. "He's been running a path in our floorboards all morning."

Astrid looked at her boyfriend again. Hiccup stopped pacing and felt her hands grasp his own that were trembling still.

"Congratulations on yer engagement." Valka added. The couple looked at her as she approached them both. She placed one hand on each of their shoulders and looked at Astrid. "Ye will be a fine addition to the Haddock clan."

Hiccup watched his beloved's face turn red, but not exactly in embarrassment. She gave a nod to her future mother-in-law.

"That means a lot to me, ma'am. Thank you."

"Come now," Valka shushed her son's intended. "Ye will call me Valka or mom."

Astrid smiled and Valka embraced the engaged couple. She then pulled back.

"Now then, the issue at hand." Valka said, looking right at her son. Hiccup gave a shy smile and his hand found his way to his neck. Valka touched her son's auburn hair with a loving touch. "Ye will do fine, son."

Hiccup gave a hesitant nod and Valka decided to leave the two to their own business. She dismissed herself by announcing she'd take Toothless out for a morning flight. As a side note, one of the newest changes had been that Hiccup had made a stirrup and saddle combination so that either his mother or Astrid could be able to take Toothless out for a ride when his chief duties kept him from taking a flight with his best friend. Toothless became very fond of the two most important women in his rider's life even though he missed his flights with his best friend. Cloudjumper decided to join the chief's mother and the Alpha. Hiccup and Astrid both watched the large dragons take the sky.

Astrid felt the arm on her shoulder give a squeeze which happened when Hiccup was extremely nervous about something. Astrid turned to

confront her twitchy fianc  .

"Okay, what are you so worked up about?" She asked, her arms draped over his leathered shoulders. One hand started to fiddle with one of his braids.

"I'm  going to see your father today." Hiccup announced. Astrid looked at him with a mix of confusion and wonder.

"Why?" She asked.

"Look, I know I didn't do the traditional Viking way of proposing marriage but I think its best  so that your family actually likes me  to go and do the Viking thing and negotiate." Hiccup answered in his Hiccup-y way. Astrid gave a smile and shook her head.

"Hiccup." She whispered his name. Hiccup gazed at her as she moved her hand to his chin and ran her thumb over his scar. "You don't have to do that. My parents already know and they're very happy for us."

Hiccup placed his hand tenderly over hers and moved to his mouth, pressing a kiss to her palm.

"I'm glad to hear that milady," he seemed very relieved by her statement but he was still stubborn. "But I need to do this. Not just for the both of us, but for the village as well. I want the other chiefs to take this seriously-"

"When did you ever care about the other chiefs?" Astrid retorted, removing her hand from his face and placing it on his heart.

"I  you know they wanted me to marry outside of our village." Hiccup decided to start. "I wouldn't let them, I don't want them to think that this was a way to get out of it. I want them to know that this had been planned and I can't think of a better reason than to draw out a marriage contract."

He had a very valid point, perhaps that's why he made such an outstanding chief. She smiled, admiringly at him and leaned up to steal a kiss from him.

"Alright," she gave in. Her hand rubbed against the leather over his heart. "Don't worry about my Dad, he's lenient."

"Right, so three yaks?" Hiccup decided to make his jests now. Astrid scoffed and used the hand on his chest to swat at his shoulder. Hiccup chuckled.

"Come on, I'm worth at least five." She played along. Hiccup chuckled and pecked her nose. He closed in on her mouth, his breath ghosting while Astrid waited for his lips.

"Three," He argued but his facade was broken when he chuckled. "And an eternity with you."

Hiccup and his damn words again, Astrid had mused once he started to lean in. Their lips met in a series of pecks.

"You should take a rag to your face." Astrid whispered as she continued to kiss his lips despite his bad breath. Hiccup started to kiss along her jaw and neck. She hummed as she pecked his forehead. "You taste like sweat."

* * *

><p>Hiccup had gone to the Hofferson house after his girlfriend's words of encouragement. She accompanied him to her front door but left him there because she had dragon affairs to handle. She kissed him twice and repeated her promise that her parents were very pleased with this arrangement.<p>

Not to mention, it was the last night of the summit and that meant a large feast. Hiccup's negotiations between Astrid's parents had only lasted an hour and most of it was her mother raving about how great of a union this was and how much she was looking forward to grandbabies. Her father was also pleased but had made his statement that Hiccup better make her happy for the rest of his life. Hiccup stammered his promise so many times and he was handed a signed contract as proof when he would make the announcement tonight at the feast.

He found his fiancée in the Great Hall and went right to her with Toothless in tow. Vikings made way for the chief, respectfully regarding him with waves and nods accompanying his title. Hiccup chose to ignore it like always. He held the rolled up contract in one hand and had the widest grin on his face. Astrid had been talking and laughing with Valka about some story from Hiccup's youth. Hiccup overheard the name DUMB and he quickly retaliated as he approached.

"If you told her about that Dragon Night Patrol story," Hiccup threatened his fiancée. Both of his women looked up at him. "I'm telling her about the Snoggletog Explosion."

Astrid narrowed her eyes at her partner. Valka only hooted in laughter.

"DUMB, son?" She chuckled. "Well, it's nice to know that my son's creativity for names really goes back."

Astrid giggled and Hiccup rolled his eyes as he took a seat next to his girlfriend after giving a kiss to his mother's head. He gave an even sweeter and longer kiss to Astrid's cheek.

"So, how'd it go?" the blonde urged. Hiccup showed her the document.

"Approved and signed." He waved it for good measure. Astrid reached for it but Hiccup decided to play with her a bit and moved his hand away. Astrid scowled at him and decided to play his little game. She reached for it again, Valka only watched in amusement at the odd form of flirtation these two had. This interaction reminded her very much of old memories and she wistfully remembered her late husband. She sighed, nostalgically.

Astrid eventually won after distracting him with a sound kiss to his mouth. She reached and ripped it right out of his hand. Hiccup mockingly huffed and Astrid unrolled the contract. She read the runes

and saw the signatures.

"Hm, six yaks." She read aloud. She looked up at Hiccup. "Felt generous today, Chief?"

Hiccup, who rolled her eyes playfully at his girlfriend's sass, took back the contract, rolled it up and placed it on the table next to Astrid's tankard of mead. He took her mug and lifted it to his lips, taking a drink to feed his parched throat.

"Careful, it's not watered." She warned him. Hiccup only rolled his eyes and placed an arm around her shoulder. Valka looked at the duo.

"So, when will ye announce it, son?" She asked, stifling her excitement.

"When all the chiefs arrive and before they all get drunk." Hiccup strategized. He thought for a moment. "Then again, if I wait until they are drunk, maybe we won't have much of negative remarks."

He looked at Astrid for her opinion. She gave a breathless chuckle and placed her head on his shoulders.

"Whenever you feel like, babe." She said as she played with his braid again. "It's your announcement."

Valka nodded and when she found Gobber, she decided to excuse herself politely and refill her tankard and chat with her late husband's best friend. It was probably an excuse to give the two some alone time which they so deserved at the moment. Hiccup kept his eyes on his mother as she reached Gobber but then refocused to his current thought.

"Ours." He corrected, replacing his joking attitude with a serious, tender voice as he closed his eyes and rested his head against hers. Astrid hummed in confusion as his little outburst after a few moments of companionable silence. "You said it was my announcement but it's not just mine."

Astrid looked at him, still with confused eyes. He brushed some loose bangs from her forehead.

"Remember, you're my right hand." He spoke to her, earnestly. "You're standing up there with me."

He picked up the contract on the table and placed it right on the table in front of her.

"You are going to show this to the crowd." He whispered to her. He then reached underneath his armor to pull out something. He held it to the light for her to see. "And I want you to wear this."

He held out his hand right by her, a silver ring with a Night Fury scale pressed into the center. Astrid's eyes widened as she picked it up and examined its' beauty.

"It's beautiful." She muttered, her facial expression was soft and loving. She looked right up at him and Hiccup took the ring from her hand. He then took her left hand and slid the ring perfectly on her

ring finger. He massaged her finger lovingly and kissed her hand. He gazed with the greatest love in his emerald eyes that rendered Astrid completely breathless. He gave his goofy, slanted grin that was only reserved for her.

"Milady."

The end.

**Please, click that button. **

3. Discovery

A/N: Okay guys, wow, I'm so amazed at all the amazing feedback and encouragement. You guys are the best! So, I have another one-shot. This one hit me while I was at a music festival this weekend and watched a fantastic Irish flute player take a great solo at one of the songs of their sets. BTW, check out Solas, this band is great if you like traditional Irish music. Anyway, I saw it and thought, completely randomly, what if Astrid could play something? We know a lot about Hiccup so I thought about Astrid and what sort of talents she might have, we already know she can't cook, so that one's checked off and dah-de-dah, Astrid is a flutist! I knew from previous knowledge that Vikings had little flutes made from wood and bone, they were end-blown and a typical one had three or four holes and they were easy to craft. So, I wrote this one messing around with the idea. Forgive me, it's not my best one. But please enjoy! You guys are amazing!

**~soldier78~ **

Discovery

Astrid Hofferson always knew her tough and fearless demeanor made her a respected Viking in Berk. She prided herself on her axe handling and her archery techniques. She was a very confident Dragon Racer, a sport which she still was the reigning champion unless her boyfriend-turned-fiancé competed as well but she still put up a good fight.

When she wasn't in public, there was more to her than what the village perceived her as. For some, Hiccup would be the only person to know the hidden qualities his girlfriend possessed. Around him, she was really sweet and goofy just like him. She still was blunt when the situation called for it. She was also much more affectionate around him. She loved stealing kisses from him when he least expected it. She loved the way her head fit comfortably in the nook between his shoulder and neck. She loved caressing his face which earned him the special gaze that was only reserved for her, alone. She loved to tease him to the point that his only method to get her to stop was to kiss her. She loved it when he was just as affectionate.

Yet, as she thought about Hiccup, there were even some things that he had to still discover about his enigmatic beloved. And it was going to be another day of discovery.

Astrid was in the cove, her back reclined against Stormfly. Since it was a Dragon Racing day, there weren't classes held that day and she had already taken care of her other dragon-related responsibilities

for the day. So, she spent her free time in the cove, all curled up and relaxing after winning yet another game. She was busy taking her dagger to a small object in her hand. She was lost in thought as she shaved down one end of the bone. She inspected her work and then set aside the dagger with satisfaction written on her face. She lifted the carved bone and placed it to her lips. Her fingers covering the holes on the top. She blew into it and out came a mellow note. She smirked and started to string some notes together.

Yes, Astrid Hofferson could play music. It was a hobby she picked up just after the Viking-Dragon War had ended and she kept it veiled for this long. She started playing an old tune, completely oblivious to her surroundings. Stormfly, who was always content on hearing her human companion sweetly play, lifted her head as she recognized another human approaching. This human, who she knew really well by now, placed a finger to the lips and the Nadder placed her head back down. Astrid had no idea that she was being watched.

She finished her tune with a soft flair of her two end fingers and removed it.

"Odin's eye,"

She jumped and turned her head, startled by the surprise presence of her fiancÃ©. Then she processed the next thing and shyly tried to hide the whistle in her hand, blushing. Hiccup shook his head as his girlfriend's frantic behavior and sat down next to her.

"How long have you been playing?" He asked, skipping the dumb question about whether or not she could. Astrid shyly tucked a piece of her hair behind her ears.

"Um, shortly after that first Snoggletog. The baby Nadders were so fidgety and I discovered that I could calm them down by playing music." She had explained. "Soâ€¦I justâ€¦started playing."

Hiccup's genuine and loving smile had just widened even further. His heart fluttered at the thought that he had made one of the best decisions when he chose Astrid for a wife. This was a warm example that, even when he thought he knew everything about her, he didn't and he sure loved discoveries.

"So go ahead, laugh." Astrid's voice broke his enchantment. Astrid fumbled with the end-blown bone flute. She was even glaring at it as if it was mocking her. "Fearless Astrid Hofferson is not as tough as she looks because she plays a flute."

Hiccup chuckled and caressed her face with the back of his hand.

"This is just one of the many things that makes me love you, Astrid." He argued earnestly as he pushed some loose hair aside. "You just keep surprising me."

She was around Hiccup, therefore, she reluctantly allowed herself to turn slightly red at his sweet affection. Hiccup even felt his cheeks slightly flame at his meaningful truth. He moved closer to his girlfriend, his arm wrapped lovingly around her shoulder and his other hand folded under the two hands holding the flute. He looked at her.

"Play me something." He requested, his voice had whispered into her ear.

"What would you want me to play?" Astrid blurted, not thinking on it entirely. Hiccup thought for a moment and then flashed his charming grin again to which Astrid could never turn down _any _request when he smiled like that.

"I'll swim and sail," he quietly sang while his nose affectionately pressed itself into the blonde locks right by her ear. He smelled the very appealing scent of her hair and continued. "on savage seasâ€|with ne'er fear of drowning."

Astrid had learned this song. At different times, Valka and Hiccup had both hummed the melody or sang the words while they were working. Because of her engagement to Hiccup, she had been welcomed in the Haddock hall whenever she wanted. So, she would help clean up after breakfast or dinner and there would Valka be humming as she sat by the fire while the couple washed and dried the dishes. As for Hiccup, Astrid heard him hum it frequently when he thought she was asleep. During their little escapes, sometimes Astrid would either drift off on Hiccup's shoulder or lay her head down in his lap and she would sleep. Occassionally, she woke up silently and stayed still when she heard him hum while he played with hair. She even remembered him one time that he sang the lyric quietly as he discreetly plucked a flower from the ground and place it behind her ear.

"If you would stay beside me." She swore she heard him mumble that day. When she awoke, she didn't dare take the plucked weed from her hair, she just leaned in and kissed him soundly.

And now, presently, he was singing the whole song to her.

"No scorching sun, nor freezing cold, will stop me on my journey." he lilted. He paused for a second to kiss her head and continued without missing a beat. "If you will promise me, your heartâ€|"

Astrid stopped him by putting the flute discreetly to her lips and played the string of notes that came next. Hiccup, awed by this wonderful talent, was silent. Boldly, Astrid played the next stanza. Hiccup imagined the words that came with that phrase, vaguely recollecting his mother's duet with his father when they reunited shortly before the tragedy. His mother was hesitant at first but continued to sing and continued to gain the courage to even fall into a wonderful dance.

But, presently, Hiccup felt like this moment was too valuable to just get up and dance a clumsy jig. Astrid played her part and continued to flutter her fingers deftly over the holes burrowed into the bone.

"But I will bring you rings of gold," He glanced at the silver band around her left finger that lifted from one of the holes. "And even sing you poetry."

They shared a look of ardor and then she was back, playing with her eyes closed, falling into the ambience of the sounds she and her beloved were producing.

"And I will keep you from all harm." He had sang and Astrid knew the line coming next and felt herself nearly gasp but she kept her focus and even added a few extra notes to make it all fancy. Hiccup cracked his trademark accusing-but-amused, slanted grin at her which he did whenever she had done something mess around with him. "If you would stay besideThe me."

She responded to him, rejecting his material and poetic promises with bold, louder notes as if she was scoffing herself. She then settled on softening her playing as if telling him that all she wanted was him to love and kiss and to sweetly hold. In return, Hiccup kissed the shell of her ear and sang the last refrain, accompanied by her nimble playing.

"I'll swim and sail on savage seas.

With ne'er fear of drowning.

And gladly ride the waves of life."

Astrid casted an upward glance at her dorky partner and started to slow down the tempo which Hiccup gladly followed along.

"If you will marry me." Hiccup had sang this low as if she was the only one to hear it. Astrid chopped up the last of the notes and held the very last note, letting it drift as the two just looked at each other. Hiccup jolted in a second and placed a wet kiss on her cheek. Astrid, who lowered her instrument, allowed a little giggle to escape. Hey, it was Hiccup being Hiccup, she had no other choice but to be sappily affectionate around him, not that she had anything wrong about dropping her Viking fortitude for moments just like these.

Hiccup's hand was holding Astrid's left hand in instinct and his adventurous fingers found the silver band and he caressed her ring finger with unmeasurable amounts of love. Astrid caught her breath immediately and gently set the flute aside so she could return his touches. Without even a single word, Astrid was suddenly in his lap after a lengthy kiss. Her head was burrowed between his neck and shoulder, her lips grazing the side of his neck. Hiccup's head rested against her forehead, his lips ghosting over her pale skin. His arms were wrapped tightly around her as if keeping her right beside him, away from harm.

They sat there for a long while in companionable silence. At some point, they held each other's hand, fingers laced together, wrapped up in each other's arms and a promised love that would last for an eternity.

The End

**Please, click that button. **

4. Strategy

**Okay, so another oneshot. You guys are totally awesome, I am completely stunned at how popular this series has gotten over the past week and a half. Your comments really mean the most to me. Brings a tear to me eye. xD. So, here's another oneshot for you

awesome people. I don't know where this idea came from but yes, hnefatafl (trans. King's Board) is an actual Nordic game, played around the Viking Age. There were other variations. The Irish called it Fidchell, the Scots called it Ard-Ri and the Finnish had a version called Tablut which is as common a name as Tafl (means table in Norse.) This game is actually very entertaining. So, I hope you enjoy. **

**Disclaimer, I own nothing. **

~Soldier78~

Strategy

After eight months of being Chief of Berk, Hiccup had figured out that he shared another thing with his father. He had a splitting headache and couldn't wait to drag himself to bed, lay down next to his fianc  who was now living with the Haddocks after some heated discussion about traditions. For Thors' sake, when did Hiccup ever follow tradition?

He snorted at that thought as he finally walked through his threshold. It was dead silent so he stared at the very odd scene before him. The dragons were curled up and asleep but his mother and his fianc  were hovering over their dining room table. Between them, a board with several pieces covered certain places. Valka had her chin pinched between her hand in thought, Astrid occasionally glanced at the older woman, waiting for the chief's mother to make her move. His eyes tended to focus on his girlfriend's focused face which closely resembled her attentive expression when she was hurling axes or when she was participating a Dragon Race. One of the many things he admired about his future wife.

He suddenly found himself approaching the table with peeked interest as Valka moved her game piece a space towards Astrid. His blonde Vikingess scowled and thought for a few long moments before shifting a piece to the right. Valka hummed at her and Astrid smirked. Hiccup grinned and pulled up a seat which surprised the two women.

"Ah, evenin' my boy." Valka greeted warmly. Astrid leaned over and kissed his cheek. Hiccup's smile widened but Astrid was back to her game.

"Hnefatafl?" Hiccup asked his mother.

"Aye, yer Dad and I used to play this game." Valka said as she moved a piece. Astrid pursed her lips for a moment. "Has yer father ever taught yeh to play?"

"Once." Hiccup remembered fondly.

"He gave up after Hiccup kept moving his opponent's pieces." Astrid interjected with a stifled giggle. Hiccup scowled at his girlfriend. Valka gave a light chuckle. Astrid shifted a piece and Valka blinked a few times when Astrid had waved a captured black piece to her future mother-in-law.

"Aye, good move, lass." She complimented her future daughter-in-law. Astrid smiled in appreciation.

"And I know how to play now," Hiccup chuffed indignantly. "Fishlegs turned out to be the better teacher."

Both women smiled but were focused on their game immensely. Hiccup watched the determination written on their faces. He was so glad that these got along very well over the course of the months. It was a great day when he came home from his duties to see the two women he loved the most interacting with each other. He loved the two dragons curled up around the fire, he loved the fire crackling in the place and he absolutely loved the company of his family. It was like Astrid was part of the family and she would be officially soon. He almost shivered pleasantly at the thought but he managed to contain himself by getting up and grabbing some stew from the cauldron that was over the pit.

He served himself a bowl but nearly dropped when he heard his girlfriend haughtily shout.

"Ha!"

He expected a look of shock on his mother's face as Astrid had declared victory very loudly but Valka only shook her head in amusement and the two females fell into laughter.

"Aye, ye are very good at this game." Valka said. She then looked at her son. "Only shows that ye will be very good as the Chief's right hand."

Astrid's face flushed but Hiccup only smiled admiringly and went to sit back in his chair, next to his right-hand. Astrid gazed at her fiancée who took a bite out of his stew. Her hand mindlessly went up to his hair and she stroked it lovingly.

"Speaking of chief, how was your day, Babe?" Astrid asked as he ate.

"I'd say it's a two-block headache." Hiccup said, looking at his mother who snorted.

"Ye are yer father's son alright." She chuckled. Hiccup smiled, warmed by that comment.

"Thanks mom." He said with his lopsided smile. Valka nodded and ran her own hand over her son's hair.

"I best be off to bed." She told the two young adults. She rose from her seat and outstretched her hand. "Good game, Astrid."

Astrid took the hand and gave it a shake.

"Thanks for teaching me, Valka." She said with her radiant smile. Valka was still smiling and nodded her head before heading for her bedroom. That left the couple alone in the living room and Hiccup was suddenly not tired anymore at the prospect of finally having some alone time with his partner.

"I'm pretty sure she was taking it easy on you, you know," Hiccup was starting to challenge. "Since you are just a novice and all."

Astrid's eyes turned sharp and glared at him.

"Wow, are you jealous that I actually knew which pieces were mine on the first try or are you challenging me?" She said, arms folded across her chest. Hiccup shoveled another spoonful into his mouth.

"Both." He said, chewing on a piece of boar meat. He swallowed and put on his best game face. "Winner gets a massage?"

Astrid snorted and started setting up the board.

"You are so on." She agreed, proudly. Hiccup chuckled at his girlfriend's competitive attitude and set aside his dinner to help organize the board.

He moved first and Astrid had moved her piece. By his eighth or so move, she already had three pieces of his. Though he was messing with her earlier, he was very entranced at how cunning she was at this game. Yes, like Valka had said, she would be a very good right hand. He should've known his girlfriend would have a knack for this game, one of her many talents was battle strategy. While he was a peace lover and a persuasive negotiator, she had the wits of a highly trained officer.

As she gazed thoughtfully at the board, her hand stroking her chin in concentration, Hiccup felt something stir within him. He found her to be very attractive when she was this studious. It was a good display of one of the key traits that made him fall in love with her. Besides her kind and stubborn characteristics, he found her intelligence to be very eye-catching. Her astuteness was different from his, some of her opinions were different from his and they would occasionally butt heads. It made arguments interesting because she was just as agile with her words as she was agile when she somersaulted through the air or surfed on her dragon's back. Not to mention, she was a very good analyst. When she saw a problem, she deduced it and presented the conclusion to Hiccup so they could enact a solution together. Hiccup, thinking about those times, had suddenly realized that this is the exact procedure that a chief and his right hand would go through multiple times. So, he stared at his right hand with the greatest affinity.

Astrid made a clever move and her little celebratory 'Ha', though quieter because Valka was in bed by now, broke Hiccup from his thoughts. He found himself a piece short and he cursed himself for being so distracted with her wonderful intelligence.

The other thing about this couple, is their knack of competitiveness. Hiccup knew the notion of competition riled up his girlfriend and found pleasure in provoking her determination to be the better player in anything. It was striking and made things very entertaining between the two.

"Good move, milady." He commented airily. His eyes wandered from piece to piece, thinking of a good move next. He looked and looked, but found himself at a stop. Astrid chuckled and had her arms crossed, confident that she bested this boy in her third go at this game. Yet, Hiccup was not so ready to give up. He moved a single piece out of the way of her attack and stood up, excusing himself to refill his bowl as he concocted a thrilling plan.

Astrid made her move, captured yet another piece and from his vantage point, he saw the current organization of the board. He used his own intelligence to formulate a strategy, one that both of them would very much enjoy. He quietly set his bowl down on the armchair nearby and he crossed the floor. His hand had settled on her shoulder. Astrid looked up at him with a quizzical gaze.

"It occurred to me, milady." He said as he knelt down and started to lean in, his lips brushing across her own, distracting her from the game board entirely. "I haven't kissed you yet today."

Astrid was about to argue but he was quick and pressed a warm, hard kiss on her lips. She squeaked against his mouth but melted against the pressure. Hiccup seized this chance and opened one eye and reached over.

Just when it was getting good, he pulled away and sat at the game board. Astrid glared at him, angry that he left her high and dry with his wonderful kiss. Hiccup smirked as he moved his piece. However, Astrid discovered his little secret.

"You little cheat!" She exclaimed. Hiccup, who was chuckling, shushed her.

"Shâ€|don't wake my mother." He warned. However, he got a kick out of his girlfriend's snarl. "And what makes you think that I cheated?"

Astrid huffed.

"You get up, get a new bowl of stew and was able to see the board in a different view. You knew that kissing me would distract me and so you flipped the pieces." She analyzed effortlessly, arms crossed again. She broke out into a grin. "Wow Hiccup, I knew you were bad at this game but desperate enough to make out with your opponent to grab the upper hand?"

"I know where you are going with this, milady." Hiccup said, playfully. "But, it was just an innocent kiss. Even though I am chief, I still have to be the boyfriend you know."

"You had your chance to 'be the boyfriend' when you first walked in here." Astrid argued.

"So I forgot when I first walked in here," Hiccup retorted with a playful sneer. "I had a very, very tiring day, milady."

Astrid hummed, mockingly agreeing with him and moved another piece to get the game rolling again. Hiccup was concentrating on his next move when he felt a foot brush his leg. He nearly shivered and glared at her.

"Seriously?"

"What? I was stretching."

"Youâ€|are playing a very dangerous game, milady." Hiccup grumbled. Astrid acted naive.

"I have half of your pieces, babe." She said. "You aren't putting up a good fight."

Hiccup shook his head and looked back at the game board. He felt the foot again, this time a little further up. He gritted his teeth to keep from moaning and he moved a piece mindlessly to distract him. Astrid smirked and moved her piece. She was very close to that corner. She placed her foot atop of his good knee. Hiccup almost hissed.

She put her foot back down on the floor and moved her piece one more time. Hiccup broke and stood up.

"That's it." He snarled. He thumped his piece in a random empty corner and marched right over to his girlfriend. Astrid looked at him with an arched brow, probably expecting him to be half-mad. However, he broke into a grin and without warning, had one arm around her back, the other under her knees and lifted her out of the chair.

Astrid almost argued but he pressed a kiss to stop her words of half-baked refusal.

"You know I get that massage." Astrid said as her boyfriend took her upstairs, passion in his eye.

"I know," he grunted as he carried her up the stairs. "But I had a long and tiring day, soâ€¦"

"You first." Astrid conceded sardonically, her arms squeezing his neck lovingly. Her head tilted and her lips gently grazed his neck. "Only because I love you."

"I love you too, milady."

The end.

**Please, click that button. **

5. Delegation

**Okay, this is a very long one shot. Just over the 4k mark. So, um, I apologize for the length of it. So this one sort of popped into my head when I thought about the Riders of Berk episode "Viking for Hire" and I thoughtâ€¦what if Hiccup took a day and had Astrid fill in. So, here is the birth of that idea in some long form. I actually had fun writing this, which sort of explains the length. There is a little OOC I think but I still had a good time. So, again, thank you all you kind-hearted people for your wonderful feedback and I hope you enjoy this next shot. **

**Disclaimer, I own nothing. **

~Soldier78~

Delegation

Astrid Hofferson yawned as she approached the threshold of the Haddock house. She rubbed her eyes and entered without knocking,

because, well, she lived here now. She shut the door quietly and was welcomed warmly by Valka who was spending time with Toothless. Astrid noticed the look of pleasure on Toothless's face but it made her think of something.

"Is Hiccup here?" She had asked her future mother-in-law. Valka nodded.

"Yes dear, he's upstairs." She said then added with a sigh, "Working."

She looked at Toothless for a second who crooned in sadness as if understanding Valka's words.

"Did he take Toothless out today?" She had inquired. Valka shook her head.

"Unlikely." The mother had said, glumly. Astrid nodded and headed for the upstairs' loft.

"I'll go talk to him." She offered and she said her good night to Valka.

Astrid headed up the stairs and stopped dead in her tracks when she reached the final step. From her vantage point, she saw the poor chief hunched over, asleep and drooling on some parchment. Astrid shook her head and walked over to the desk. She placed her two hands on his shoulders and gave them a shake.

"Wake up, babe."

Hiccup muttered something like 'no, don't put the perch over the well.' Astrid rolled her eyes again and decided that she needed to take a more aggressive approach. With her hidden strength, she pulled the chair towards her which startled Hiccup awake. He snorted and flailed his hands until he clasped onto his desk as if he was being pulled away forever from his workspace. Astrid chuckled at the reaction, she had only maybe moved it an inch or two towards her.

She then decided to make up for the scare by leaning forward, wrapping her arms around his neck and pressing a kiss to the top of his head.

"You fell asleep, babe." She murmured into his sweet-smelling auburn hair. The chief placed a calloused hand over one of her hands that were draped over his tight shoulders.

"What time is it?" he asked, groggily, slowly returning to the world of consciousness.

"Near midnight at least." She said as she removed herself from her fiancÃ©'s back. Hiccup slightly scowled in disappointment from removal of loving warmth. He looked over his shoulder at his girlfriend who sat on the bed and started to remove her shoulder pads.

"Oh Gods, I keep losing track of time." Hiccup said as he stood from his chair. Astrid placed her pads onto the ground and started to remove her boots.

"When was the last time," she grunted as she took one boot off. "You took Toothless out for a day?"

She had the other one off and Hiccup sitting on the bed next to her.

"Not for a while." He mourned. He knew what Astrid was about to get at and instantly made his rebuttal which was only interpreted as a meek excuse from the Hofferson. "But I have too much-"

"Too much to handle," she said as she reached over to her braid to remove the tie. Hiccup stubbornly beat her to it, holding her golden hair in his soft, large hand. She only stared at his half-lidded, guilty eyes. Her hand came up to caress his cheek but also pushed a bit on it to get him to look right at her when his eyes were too focused on her braid. "You need a day off."

"I wish I could." He said, sorrowfully. Astrid shook her head and slapped his hand away from her braid when he was paying more attention to it, his way of ignoring any issue at hand. He looked at her, startled for her rejection but she amended it by placing another hand on his face, stroking his head with her hand, brushing away his messy, damp bangs aside.

"You need to spend a day with Toothless." She said sternly. She licked her lips and glared right at him with that no-nonsense look. "Tomorrow, you'll both go out for the day and not return until dinner."

"But, I have to deal with this yak-"

Finding that affection was not enough to get through his thick head, she whacked him right on the head. His head bobbed forward from impact and he held it as he glared at his suddenly violent girlfriend. She remained stoic with one hand still on his cheek.

"Your mom and I will watch over the village tomorrow." She volunteered firmly. "You take Toothless out, go flying, get yourself in some kind of trouble and then come back at sundown."

Hiccup smiled, uplifted by the sweetness of that offer. His eyes softened from guilt and remorse to gratefulness and love as he took his girlfriend's hand off his face and held it with his own, his fingers toying with the engagement ring on her left ring finger. He brought the hand to his lips and kissed her fingers.

"You sure you can handle it?" he challenged, playfully. Deep down, he knew he could trust his girlfriend to handle the same situations he was dealing with but he felt bad saddling all of the situations he was struggling with tonight on her shoulders. Astrid gave a proud, confident smirk.

"Sure I can." She said, reassuringly. "I will become your second-in-command."

"Oh you can," he said, slowly, pretending he wasn't convinced by her affirmation. Astrid knew by the tone of his voice what he was going to do next. He shrugged one shoulder and moved closer, one arm

wrapped around her shoulder and the other pushing her down on the bed. His eyes, half-lidded and seductive, gazing at his second-in-command. "Then I guess I should start my day off now."

"Slow down, dragon boy." She halted, a palm against his shoulder to shove him off. He groaned in jesting disappointment but Astrid stood up and removed her belt and spikes from her skirt. She then laid on the bed, waiting for Hiccup to join her. Hiccup smirked and crawled over to her, wearing only his trousers and tunic. It was then he dove in and captured her lips in a deep, exploring kiss.

* * *

><p>Astrid felt the bed move and opened her eyes, peered over shoulder to see Hiccup rise from the bed. She rolled onto her back, realizing that when he got up, she had to get up to. She yawned and rubbed her eyes. Hiccup laughed quietly as he adjusted a fresh tunic on himself.<p>

"Mornin' milady," he said with his lopsided smile. "Time for you to go to work."

Astrid only shook her head and rose from the bed. She had gotten dressed within a minute. Hiccup was just fitting himself into his flying leathers when she walked over with her tunic and underskirt on. She assisted him and clicked two clasps together as he ran a hand through his hair. The two looked up at each other, gazing at each other with the unending ardor they had for each other.

Hiccup cleared his throat and painfully tore his eyes away from his beloved. His eyes fell onto the papers scattered at his desk.

"So, um," he said , awkwardly as he approached the desk. Astrid trailed behind him. "These are notes that I took yesterday, there is an argument about putting up another dragon perch which would be over one of the drinking wells. Some minor checkups in the Dragon Hangar, a naming ceremony for the Torgerson daughter andâ€|oh, A dispute about a yak that gave birth on someone else's land."

Astrid took the parchment that he held in his hand. She read over his chicken-scratch penmanship.

"Oh fun," she grumbled. Hiccup kissed the side of her head.

"You know, you don't really need to do this." He offered. Astrid glared at him and reached over to his map-making journal that was still lying on his desk, forgotten. She shoved it right into his chest with purposeful force.

"Don't forget this." She said, stubbornly. Hiccup chuckled as he tucked it beneath his leathers. He looked at his girlfriend.

"No more baby Magnuses okay?" he pleaded playfully. Astrid shook her head.

"I was thinking more like Snorri." Astrid quipped, smirking. Hiccup only shook his head and reached over to grab his helmet. He placed it on his head, his face plate still propped open.

"Why I trust you is so beyond me." He jested as he fixed his helmet. He leaned down and pressed a hard, fervent kiss to her lips. She felt the leather of his helmet dig into her cheekbones but she cared less because she loved the thrill of his warm, chapped lips against her own. Their mouths moved together in unity before finally pulling away with a wet pop. Her forehead was pressed against his helmet.

"Because I always save your ass before." She reminded, reaching up and slamming his face plate down to cover his face completely. She then spun him around and swatted at his behind like he was a dog. "Now get the Hel out of here."

"Love you!" he called as he tromped down the stairs. Astrid chuckled as she heard Hiccup announce to Toothless about their day off. Her two boys bounded out of the house and she watched from the window when they took to the skies. She smiled, her heart fluttering at the wonderful sight.

"Love you too, babe."

* * *

><p>She had completed the checkups after fetching some breakfast in the Mead Hall. Valka, who was totally on board with helping out Astrid in return for relieving her workaholic son for a day, was dealing with the Dragon Perch problem.<p>

It was time for the naming ceremony. She nervously stood in front of a crowd of twenty when the babe was placed into her waiting arms. She looked at the baby and was swooned by the little girl's pudgy face. It made her nervousness disappear and she proclaimed the name to the crowd, a name that was actually chosen by the parents.

"As a representative of the Chief of Berk, I welcome this baby into the Hooligan Tribe and pronounce the name to be," Astrid paused as the name was whispered into her ear. She thought for a moment, a little uncertain about the name but steeled her shoulders and regarded the crowd. "Droplaug."

Astrid shook her head as she left the hall. Stormfly was there, waiting for her rider.

"Droplaug." She said to Stormfly, making a joke out of it before dealing with the most grudging issue of the day. She mounted on her dragon. "Alright girl, let's go deal with this yak problem."

When she got to the farm, she found out that it was Mulch who was arguing with the no-longer Silent Sven. They angrily hurled half-baked insults at each other and was about to pounce, wielding slimy cod when Astrid decided to intervene.

"Alright, that's enough!" she barked loudly as she landed Stormfly between them. She dismounted and glared at both farmers. "Okay, explain what the problem is."

"This is a matter for the chief." Sven declared to the blonde woman.

"Well, I'm chief for the day, so explain to me what the damn problem

is!"

"Where is Hiccup?" Mulch had interjected. Astrid looked at him with her stern, piercing eyes.

"He's taking a day of absence." She said, starting to lose her patience. "Now what is the problem?!"

Just as Mulch opened his mouth, there was a loud shout.

"Dragon fight!"

Astrid sighed and mounted on Stormfly. She glared at the two farmers.

"Don't kill each other, I'll be back." She vowed. Stormfly bucked into the air and flew towards the new crisis of the day. It was a Monstrous Nightmare that was ganging up on an equally stubborn Zippleback. This would've normally been handled by dragon riders that were experienced in taming these dragons but unfortunately, Ruffnut, Tuffnut and Snotlout were nowhere to be found. She cursed and searched for the next possible answer.

Gobber was supporting Valka who was sitting upright, clutching her head. Astrid immediately went to her.

"What happened?" she asked, out of breath.

"I don't know." Valka said, a little winded herself. "I tried to calm them both down but they just won't listen."

Astrid thought for a moment, then looked at the more experienced Dragon trainer.

"Okay, I have an idea. Try to keep them from firing at each other." Astrid advised. Valka nodded, grabbing her fallen staff and attempting her strategy once again. Meanwhile, Astrid dashed over to Stormfly and flew towards the Forge.

Astrid had returned with two sticks with wads of cloth on them. She called Valka over and handed her one of the makeshift torches.

"Will this work?" Valka asked as Astrid ordered Stormfly to light her torch.

"I dunno," Astrid huffed. "I'm seeing if I can manipulate Hiccup's sword without the sword itself."

She headed over to the Nightmare and started waving the fire around. The Zippleback gurgled behind her as if unamused by this intervention but Valka was quick in waving her torch in front of the contempt reptile.

"Down." She muttered over and over again. Astrid did a similar thing, reaching out her hand.

"Okay, this needs to stop." She spoke to the Nightmare. "No fighting."

Her hand inched closer and closer until it touched the snout of the

Nightmare. The Zippleback behind her made a step forward which alarmed the Nightmare. Astrid was thrown to the side by the snout of dragon in front of her. The torch had landed on the grass, igniting a small fire right by her, a couple of sparks jumped right onto her upper arm. Astrid hissed, patting the fire out before it would turn into a worse burn. During this, Valka had jumped out of the way.

"Seriously?!" Astrid commented, frustrated, holding her upper arm. Luckily, Gobber had gotten a bucket of water and tossed it onto the small fire. Astrid coughed from the smoke and rolled onto her back. She stared at the clouds for a moment, wishing that Hiccup was here. She blinked though, her brow furrowed as she realized that she could and would do this without Hiccup's help. She was the second-in-command, she was in charge of these dragon issues, she could handle this. She stoically got to her feet and thought for a moment. The Nightmare took two steps back and was ready to blast at the Zippleback. She had to act now.

With a loud war cry, rushing past Valka who was about to stop the young adult, Astrid pounced and leapt for the head of the Nightmare. She grabbed it by the horns and twisted its neck to the side on the way down, subduing the stubborn thing. She drew a sharp whistle and Stormfly came trotting over, roaring at the Nightmare.

"Not helping girl," She said, out of breath as she kept the dragon pinned. She made a motion with her hand and the dragon turned and squatted. Astrid dug into the saddlebag and pulled out a wad of dragon grass. "Hope this works."

She flung it at the approaching Zippleback. The two-headed beast became immediately distracted and started to rub itself against the nip, no matter how small the dose was. Astrid reached into the pouch again, ignoring the biting pain on her upper arm and she grabbed another wad and placed it by the Nightmare, slowly getting off of it.

With the three dragons easily subdued by the magic of dragon nip, Astrid stood up and took the time to assess the problem. Luckily, Fishlegs finally arrived and helped her figure out how to get these dragons apart. Turns out, it was a stupid territorial thing with a Zippleback ganging up on a litter of Nightmare babies. A Zippleback owner managed to get the dragon away from the Nightmare nest and that was the end of that. Valka approached the girl with an amused grin.

"Well done, dear." She marveled as Astrid reached to tear the hem of her tunic. Valka stopped her and held out some bandages she had retrieved.

"Thanks." Astrid mumbled, about to take the items with great appreciation, however, her future mother-in-law was persistent in wrapping the wound herself. Astrid only sighed and allowed the Haddock matron to wrap the gauze around.

"Ye are a tough lass," Valka said as she tightened the knot of the gauze. Astrid's face reddened. Valka smiled and patted the girl on the shoulder. "Smart, too."

"Thanks, now if you will excuse me," she said, exasperated slightly

from the tumultuous situation. She walked over to Stormfly. "I need to deal with a baby yak."

She got to the yak farm and found the two farmers whacking each other with the old codfish. She sighed and ran a tired hand over her face.

"Okay, I'm back. Put the fish down!" She shouted but the two farmers paid no heed to the agitated acting chief. She cursed under her breath, dismounting off of Stormfly. "Sweet baby Thor in a thunderstorm,"

She intervened by pushing herself in front of the two Vikings, shoving them apart. She then deftly stole their cod and tossed it over to Stormfly who caught the two fish expertly in her mighty jaw.

"What was that for?" Mulch cried indignantly, waving his right hook at the girl.

"Stop being Muttonheads for two minutes and let's deal with this issue peacefully." Astrid delegated quickly. The two lowered their hands and Astrid breathed a sigh of relief. "Okay, first thing, explain to me the problem."

"My yak gave birth but Sven is claiming that it belongs to him," Mulch presented. Sven glared at the stout farmer.

"It was born on me land." He argued, arms crossed. Mulch glared back.

"My yak couldn't control where to give birth."

"But she can control where she goes prior to birthing."

The two continued to throw rebuttals at each other and were about to erupt into senseless violence. Astrid stopped them with a loud growl.

"Okay, since you two can't come up with some sort of compromise like mature adults," Astrid snarled, insensitively. Mulch was about to argue when she put up a hand. "I'll buy the yak off your hands and divide the money between you two."

* * *

><p>So, the yak was sold for four pieces of hacksilver and Astrid took the baby yak home. All the while, she thought about another way to deal with this situation. This new idea came to her head after she presented the baby yak to Valka and talked about the issue over a bowl of soup. Once it hit her with full force, she thanked Valka for letting her listen to her rants and making the soup and stormed upstairs.<p>

Not too long after, Hiccup had stumbled through the door. He was windswept and completely satisfied with his day with Toothless. He talked excitedly about two new islands they had discovered just west of the archipelago to his mother but noticed the baby yak curled up in Toothless's usual place by the fireplace. He was about to ask but Valka pointed upstairs and simply said 'ask your right hand.'

So, Hiccup made his way up to his room and was about to call Astrid's name to alert his homecoming but stopped dead when he found his girlfriend at his work desk. Just like he was the night before, she was passed out on the scattered pieces of parchment and she had some drool dripping down her face. Hiccup just shook his head, quietly placed his helmet down on his bed and approached his passed out girlfriend. He placed two hands on her hunched back, his hands flexing against her taut muscles but before he tried to rouse her, he looked at the snippets of runic writing that was only her penmanship. He caught the words 'law', 'organization' and 'judgment', this peaked his interest and he slowly lifted one of her arms and pulled out the paper.

He sat at his bed, reading the parchment with vast interest. When he finished, he looked right at his girlfriend and was utterly speechless at her unending intelligence. He decided to walk back over to her and he crouched down, ignoring the awkwardness of his stump. His hand brushed across her forehead, she started to stir.

"Wake up, milady."

Astrid groaned.

"Wha?" she said, sleepily. Hiccup chuckled and stood up. As she blinked the sleep from her eyes, he moved the chair gently out from the desk. That startled her a bit and she took it as a sort of retribution from last night even when that wasn't Hiccup's intent. His intent was to reach over and pick her up from the chair in a bridal carry. He gently set her down on the bed, her back against his headboard as he sat down by her legs, her booted feet were on his lap. He started removing the shoes and looked at her.

"I read your notes." He said, pausing to hold up the paper. Her face flushed.

"I just thought thatâ€¦" She was prepared to explain herself, Hiccup just shook his head.

"It's genius."

Astrid shrugged.

"It's a practice that other Vikings practice, though in a larger population." Astrid said, modestly. "But, I figured we could build a model here and test it out."

"So why is there a yak in downstairs?" he asked with a raised brow, obviously amused by his girlfriend's antics.

"The only solution I could come up with before they brought out the maces was to buy it off their hands and divvy up the money I gave them." Astrid replied with a huffing sigh. "I'll get it out of the house tomorrow."

"Don't worry about that." He said, his hand suddenly on her cheek. "Take a day with Stormfly tomorrow."

"Seriously?" she asked with a raised brow.

"Yeah, you deserve it." He stated. Astrid shook her head but grasped his hand. She took it from her cheek and interlaced her fingers between his own.

"That's not fair, this was only a day's work-"

"You did more than a day's work." Hiccup encouraged.

"You trying to get me out of your hair tomorrow?" Astrid inquired, playfully. Hiccup rolled his eyes.

"Of course I am." He quipped. "I mean, I feel very threatened because my girlfriend solved not only a single dispute but came up with an idea to solve all future disputes. I have to earn back my reputation as chief somehow. Not to mention, you actually let the parents name a girl Droplaug."

Astrid only rolled her eyes at her boyfriend's haughty but jesting claim. Internally, she was just completely flattered that he had said, in his Hiccup-y way, that she had done a pretty good job today. She found no other argument on her lips so she leaned forward and pressed her lips roughly against his. Hiccup eagerly returned the kiss, leaning forward. He felt that hand on his flight suit and he withdrew.

By the time he had removed his suit, he was back on his bed, arm over Astrid's shoulders, Astrid tucked into his side after getting rid of her overskirt and shoulder pads. It was the look in her eyes that told him that she was very, very exhausted and he decided help her drift into a peaceful sleep. So he helped removed her shoulder armor, that's when his eyes drifted south onto her left upper arm.

"Astridâ€¦what happened to your arm?"

Astrid yawned and snuggled into his side, obviously too tired to recount the certain story.

"Mmm," she hummed as she pressed her ear to his chest, hearing the calming heartbeat. "Ask your mom."

Hiccup only accepted her request and kissed her forehead, his lips lingering there for a few seconds. It was at this moment that he reminded himself that he was going to be married to this charming, funny and intelligent woman and smiled, thinking how great Berk will become with her help in governing the village nearly every day. It was more enduring to remind himself that after a long day of chiefing, they would both be here at the end of the day, wrapped up in each other's arms and love, just like they are presently. He smiled, pressed another kiss, this time to her brow.

"I could get use to this."

The end.

**Please, click that button. **

****Okay, I just wrote this one, just to write it. It was supposed to take place before the fourth one-shot in this series. I don't know where this came from, the characters are OOC a bit and I reallyâ€|well, just wanted to write it. It was fun, but honestly, not my best work. But, I hope you'll enjoy this one. Thank you again for all the great feedback and there are some requests that are giving me some ideas. So up to this point, if you have an idea, please, by all means, share it. I'm actually loving this series. Thanks!****

****Disclaimer, I own nothing****

****~Soldier78~****

Nightmares

There was a time for everything. There was a time to be born and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to mourn and a time to dance. There was a time for everything.

And there was no better example of this fact than Hiccup's first year as chief. He had experienced the loss of his father, he mourned silently over the course of his adjustment to his chiefdom. His thoughts would always reign back to the last dance his mother and father shared, their jovial laughter and singing echoing through his ears. He had wept quietly in the shadows of his home when he remembered that was the last time he saw his father smiling.

Now, Hiccup is nearing his eight month's mark when he took the role and it was a time of peace and a time to build. Repairs were still finishing, upgrades were added because it was a great time to try new things to improve the longevity of a house so it can better endure Devastating Winter and Bewilderbeasts' icy blasts. Vikings and Dragons were working alongside to make these changes and Hiccup, as chief, watched his people with pride as they worked and lived harmoniously together.

Yet, even as he slips further in the shoes of a chief with growing confidence. There were still nights when he missed his youth and there were still nights when he would relive the tragedy over and over again. He relived the screams of 'Dad!' He relived the sobs from his mother and the anger he had directed at Toothless. He relived the pain, the shock and the regret. Then, when the nights became true demons, when he saw himself folded over another body, crying out a new name into the gray, snowy clouds.

"Astrid!"

Then, his eyes would snap right open. His whole body bathed in cold sweat and at times, he would feel those phantom pains. He would tremble and seek solace in the comforting companionship found in his dragon whose head would rest in his lap as Hiccup propped himself against the headboard, quietly stroking the scales of his friend to calm his racing heart. This is a frequent dream and the sole cause of his constant lack of sleep.

He finally had it with spending the night, reclined against the headboard until sunup only to be yawning and dragging his feet slowly in the daylight. That did not look good on a chief. He didn't know

why or what made him fed up if this had gone on for so long now but he rose from his bed, slipped out of the room without disturbing Toothless and creaked down the stairs so carefully to let his mother sleep.

And out the door, he went.

* * *

><p>Astrid Hofferson was human before she was a Viking. Though, she'd never admit it with the exception of one person. She had suffered from several nightmares but decided to keep the stubborn tough Viking demeanor and kept it hidden from the rest of the village, even from him. With the most energy, she threw herself into her work to ward off the aftereffects of insomnia. She had this thing about vulnerability, especially from these dreams that were only being pests sent from Loki.<p>

It was a really bad one tonight. She bolted upright in bed, screaming his name into the shadows of the night. Her heart thudding against her chest and her fingers clenching her blanket tightly. The shock dissipated and all she felt was defeat. Another night gone. So, like every night, she threw the cover off of her and petted Stormfly who peeped inside the window of her room. She stroked her scales and whispered to go back to sleep, she would be fine. The Nadder crooned and nuzzled her face empathetically before finally falling back asleep.

Astrid tightened her shoulder pads and tightened the belt on her skirt. She took her axe off of the wall and headed down the stairs, quietly as she could so she wouldn't wake her parents. The routine was to slip out, go to the forest and throw an axe around in the dark to help her ease her rattled mind.

She was so absent-minded that she failed to see the incoming traffic. Her body had bumped into another and she was about to put on a stone face and situate the axe on her shoulder when she heard the voice.

"Astrid?"

She lowered her axe, nearly dropping it.

"Hiccup!" She exclaimed, half-surprised and half-scoffing at his own sneaky behavior. Hiccup gave a sheepish grin and Astrid narrowed her eyes at him, trying to hide her reason for doing the exact same thing by scolding him. "Gee, I know you like night time flights but shouldn't you be in bed?"

Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck nervously but Astrid saw the look in his eyes and this time, dropped the axe. It was the dead of night, no villagers were out where they were. She walked right up to him and placed a gentle hand on his cheek. Her thumb stroked the pale, soft skin.

"What's wrong, babe?" She asked him. Hiccup sighed and covered his hand over hers. He held it against her cheek, melting at the touch which calmed his quaking heart.

"I don't think I say 'I love you' enough times to you," Hiccup

confessed as he reveled in her warm, soothing touch. Astrid tilted her head, a little confused at his odd declaration. It was flattering yes, but it wasn't like Hiccup unless something was wrong and it involved her in some way. "I mean, how often do I tell you that I love-"

He was cut off by a curt kiss to his lips. It shut him up and he gave his signature goofy post-kiss grin.

"Babe, did you have a nightmare?"

It was one of the things that Hiccup loved about her, her bluntness had made her very good at analyzing behavior and language to come to a sound conclusion. She could read him like an open-book and she always knew exactly what to say to keep him grounded. This was the perfect person to marry.

He gave a small nod. Astrid sighed and brushed the bangs from his forehead.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Not until I know why you are up so late." Hiccup reasoned, stubbornly. He mirrored her affection but his hand remained stroking her fine, blonde mane. Astrid shook her head.

"It's nothing." She mumbled, equally stubborn. "I just can't sleep tonight."

Hiccup hummed.

"I know the feeling." He darkly empathized. Astrid gave a small, lopsided smile but it faltered into a displeased frown.

"Hiccup, have you been sleeping at all?" she asked. There was a full moon out and it was bright enough to highlight the dreary face of her fianc  . Hiccup's frown gave it away and Astrid sighed. Hiccup, however, had a pretty good idea emerging into his head.

"Astrid, how about we go inside and talk?" He asked, hopefully. He shivered. "It's pretty cold out here."

It was pretty cold, soon autumn would be over and winter would begin to set in. With Hiccup demonstrated a bit of the chilly weather, Astrid decided to accept Hiccup's proposal and Hiccup grabbed her hand, pulling her back towards his home in a rather rushed manner.

"Hiccup?" she asked, a bit perplexed about his odd demeanor. Hiccup was quiet as he led her to his home. He led her up the stairs quietly to his bedroom and then to his bed. Astrid knew of his intentions was just to lay there and cuddle. It was what Hiccup did when he wanted to speak his mind to her. They laid like this after a tough day of chieftaining and dragon handling, they laid like this when Hiccup was going through chieftain training and they laid like this the night after the Tragedy. In these moments, they were the only two people in the world. They would talk until they had nothing left to talk about. Sometimes it led to other things, but other times, they exhausted themselves with their words and they could just fall asleep in each other's arms, the emotional tension suddenly tossed out the window

and lost to the night.

Tonight, ever the gentleman, Hiccup reached over and unattached her shoulder armor. Astrid got up and removed the spikes and skulls from her skirt. She set them on the ground and took off her boots as well. Hiccup was lying on his back, waiting for Astrid to finally settle with her head on his chest. She draped an arm over his abdomen and his arm snaked around her waist to hold him to her.

"It used to be just reliving his death," Hiccup said softly without Astrid's coercion. His blonde Vikingess just listened to him without saying a word. He had a very lengthy pause which almost brought Astrid to say his name. He continued though, abruptly with a sigh. "But then, I get to the body and it's yours."

Her head snapped right up and she looked at him with disbelief in her eyes.

"Mine?" she muttered. Hiccup nodded.

"It's been this way for two weeks now," Hiccup freely spoke, feeling unusually open tonight. Astrid tightened her lips together in a rueful, sad smile but it left quickly and she placed her head back onto his chest.

"I'm right here, Hiccup." She promised. Hiccup kissed her forehead, tenderly.

"I love you." He said to her. Astrid drew back her arm and started to rub his chest with her hand with her own uncharacteristic tenderness. It felt very soothing to him to know that she was right there with him. He saw the look of distance on her face, however and he placed his hand over the top of hers on his chest, holding it there. "Now I get to ask, what was your nightmare about?"

Astrid's hand flexed against his chest, slightly nervous. She swallowed.

"You dying," she answered. The answer was so simple, but letting the words tumble from her mouth felt hard and she shrank which indicated that she was feeling vulnerable. Hiccup shook his head and kissed her forehead again. His lips lingered there a while longer.

"I'm right here, Astrid." He repeated with the same unquestionable love and devotion she had used to convince him.

When Astrid lifted her head, she gazed at the man before her. It occurred to her that they would be married soon and that meant every night would be like this. This compelled her to lean forward and steal a kiss from his slightly opened mouth. Hiccup, a little surprised by the sweet contact, blinked twice but then submitted to the taste and comfort of her kiss. She tried to pull away but he slanted his lips right over hers to return the same comfort. When they pulled apart, they gazed into each other's eyes.

"We'll be married soon." Hiccup said after a long silence that just had them looking straight at each other. Astrid gave a nod, her head falling back to his chest. It was moments like these that Hiccup lived for, watching this side of his strong and demanding Vikingess transform into a sweet, gentle soul who just wanted to be loved and

love, just like him. That doesn't go to show that she wasn't completely soft, she knocks sense into him when the need calls for it. But, for a moment like this, they both shelved their tough fortitudes and sought solace in each other.

Hiccup then thought about the idea of her staying the night. With her just even in the same bed with him, wrapped around him, he would awaken with rejuvenated energy. Nightmares never plagued him when she was here. If she stayed tonight, he'd be very grateful.

"Stay." He murmured into her flaxen hair which he had undone the braid and was now just flowing down her back. He played with a strand. Astrid turned her head so that her chin was pressed into his chest. She stared at him with those sky blue eyes that he lost himself in and she reached forward, brushing his bangs aside. She loved the silky feel of his shaggy, auburn hair.

"My parents." She reminded him, solemnly. "They be crossed in the morning."

Hiccup decided to resort to desperation.

"I thinkâ€¦I think I need to be honest here," Hiccup said with a sigh. Astrid looked up at him, awaiting his confession. "I sleep betterâ€¦with you beside me. I've been having these nightmares a lot more often and wellâ€¦when you're here, they just disappear."

Astrid was silent for a moment, Hiccup thought he had screwed things up completely because of her long quiet. She placed her ear against his chest again, hearing the soothing heartbeat. She bit her lip for a moment, obviously contemplating. What she was thinking about Hiccup wasn't certain to say. But, after a few moments of consideration, she looked up at him.

"Maybeâ€¦we can convince my parents thatâ€¦" her offer faltered into a nervous pause. Hiccup, being his clever self, figured out her proposition.

"Move in with me, now." He requested, assertively coupled with a gentleness in his tone that made Astrid smile lovingly.

"But tradition, babe." She said with a rueful smile. Hiccup shook his head and smirked.

"Since when do I follow tradition?" he questioned her in a soft, husky voice. Astrid hummed in playful thoughtfulness and nodded her head.

"Good point." She acceded good-naturedly. Hiccup grinned his dorky grin and pecked her forehead.

"Every night, like this." He attempted to charm. Astrid's nose wrinkled at the sudden heat from his breath.

"It'll be one Hel of a negotiation, babe." Astrid started to consider. "Mom will try to push the wedding closer, Dad willâ€¦wellâ€¦"

"Try to rip my head off and feed it to his Nightmare?"

Astrid giggled and lifted her body off slightly, just to lean up and peck his nose. He smiled and pressed their foreheads together.

"It'll be worth it though." He stated. "I'll get some sleep finally."

Astrid frowned slightly and placed her hand on his cheek again, rubbing it affectionately.

"That bad, huh?" she asked him. Hiccup nodded against her forehead.

"Maybe it's anxiety for the wedding." He offered as a hypothesis. Astrid smirked.

"Cold foot?"

Hiccup playfully scowled at her.

"Was that a crack about my leg?" he played along. Astrid only shook her head at her boyfriend's sarcastic front and pecked his lips.

"Let's talk to them in the morning," she agreed as she settled back down on his chest. Hiccup smiled, face pressed into her hair and smelling the lovely, honey and salty scent it carried.

"I love you, Astrid." He whispered earnestly and his lips kissed the crown of her head for emphasis.

"I love you too, Hiccup." She replied, her voice soft as if she was lulled to sleep. It only took a matter of minutes for the two Vikings to close their eyes but not before Hiccup reached over, took the blanket from the edge of the bed and draped it over the both of them. He then glanced one more time at his fiancée and then blew out the candle at his bedside table. Together, they managed to shove the nightmares into the shadows of the night and fall asleep into peaceful dreams.

It was a time of peace.

The end.

**Please, click that button. **

7. Memories

**Okay, so here is another one-shot. This was a request, my first request ever, so please bear with me. This one is sort of eh, but I really felt my confidence boost from your feedback in the last chapter. This is sort of a melancholy, OOC-sorta prompt. And, I'm bumping up the rating on this shot to T because it is started to drift into that area. It's just so much fun writing Hiccup and Astrid. Anyway, thanks for all the wonderful reviews and I hope you enjoy this next one shot. I'm open to requests and so on without further ado, here's the next drabble thingy. **

**Disclaimer, I own nothing. **

****~Soldier78~****

Memories

Hiccup had no idea how it happened. But it did and it tumbled out of control way to fast. One moment he was approached by his angry girlfriend and the next, they are yelling at each other at the top of their lungs. The next, next thing was his girlfriend brushing off his request that sounded more like a barking order and Odin almighty, he felt utterly disgusting when he shouted that she was to obey the chief. Of all the stupid stuff he has ever said, that one sure wins him the most disgusting and vile boyfriend award. If he was still hers.

He immediately regretted everything that he had said to her in that moment, realizing that he had crossed the line. He paid no attention to the protests of his villagers when he mounted on Toothless and went after his furious beloved. Hiccup wasn't one to walk away, he was going to apologize, grovel if he had too.

Toothless was in the air, chasing after Stormfly. They flew over the expanse of the North Sea, catching up to the speed of the Nadder. Astrid had noticed by looking over her shoulder and tried to increase the distance but to no avail. Hiccup sidled next to her after some sharp maneuvering.

"Astrid, listen to me-"

"I'm not listening to anything you have to say!" she spat at him and nudged Stormfly into a sharp ascent to avoid her fiancÃ©. Hiccup exhaled and switched flight positions. Toothless lifted higher but then Stormfly was diving towards the icy sea. Hiccup was cursing every god in Asgard as Astrid used her agility and her dragon's agility against him.

Then, it happened. In the speed a nightmare would possess, Astrid shouted in great pain, her hand shot to her shoulder. Stormfly lost control and Astrid was flung from the saddle.

"Astrid!" he shouted. He recovered quickly from the shock and commanded Toothless to dive after her. He faced the breakneck wind slapping his exposed skin. He felt the wind sting his eyes to tears but he cared less.

Toothless had missed the grab and Hiccup was quick in switching Toothless to his glide function. He stood up on the saddle and dove into the choppy waves. The weight of his prosthetic pulled him beneath the waves but his dive allowed him to cut through the ocean. The salt water stung his eyes but he searched for her body. She was right in front of him, eyes closed and her hand lying limply against her shoulder. He used his arms to swim quicker. He wrapped one arm around her waist and used all his other muscles to carry them to the surface.

Once they broke through the surface, he was coughing and exhausted from all the hard work, not to mention his metal leg was still causing him some trouble.

"Toothless!" he shouted, spitting out water that had sprayed into his

mouth. He saw his treading the water in a dog paddle fashion. Hiccup gently grabbed the saddle rung and hoisted his blonde Vikingess onto his back. With careful work, he managed to climb on. He searched around. Overhead, dark, ominous clouds moved closer. They were too close for comfort. Hiccup groaned and cursed when he looked at his girlfriend.

He had a look of grief on his face when he saw that the object that had penetrated her shoulder was an arrow. That meant there was an enemy ship nearby and, coupled with the storm approaching, he had to find land and shelter quickly. The waves were too much for Toothless to just spring out into flight.

He was relieved to find some land though, they were close to the shoreline.

"Over there, bud." He directed as he held his unconscious girlfriend in his trembling arms. He used one hand to brush the bangs aside. "Oh Gods, Astrid. Gods, please don't die on me."

It took a while but they finally made it to the shore. Hiccup didn't wait until Toothless hit the beach, once he could stand on the sandy bottom, he carried his girlfriend onto the beach on foot.

There was a cave right where the forest met the beach. Finally, the Gods had done something rewarding for him today. He hurried quickly, Toothless trailing behind. There was a loud squawk heard from overhead and Hiccup stopped to watch Stormfly land gracefully onto the sand. She crooned and nuzzled the girl's face in his arms.

"To the cave, Stormfly." He said with a nod towards the hole, not allowing time for any explanation or wavering assurance.

* * *

><p>They made it just as the first lightning forked across the sky. The thunder tumbled in with its guttural rumble. Rain started to pelt viciously and the winds picked up. He felt the misty droplets swing into his face from the mighty gales outside.<p>

He had to brave the devastating weather to get firewood before it would turn too damp. He ordered Stormfly and Toothless to stay with Astrid who he had laid down, using his leather saddlebag as a pillow and a blanket he kept in said saddlebag draped over her body.

He came back and found that Astrid was paling from the loss of the blood. He had to hurry and get that ugly thing out of her shoulder. He was on his knees, ignoring the sharp, twisted pain on putting leverage on his stump. He took her into his arms and gently started to remove the shoulder pad. He didn't need to look at the metal to remove it, he concentrated on the expressionless face. He felt his heart twist and turn with gruesome grief, trying desperately to hold back his tears of fear. He couldn't lose her, not tonight.

He steeled his jaw as he tenderly placed his girlfriend back upon the ground. He stared for a moment at the shaft protruding from her shoulder, he knew he had to snap it enough to get the red tunic, matted down with her blood and seawater, off.

So he did, but it didn't settle his fears and anger at all. He peeled

the tunic off of her as soft as he could, biting his lip when he saw the soft face of his beloved twist into discomfort. His breath hitched as he finally removed the red fabric. He saw her enough times in this state of undress, back when she was awake and shoving the hem of his tunic upwards as he slowly, tortuously, took off hers. Those wonderful memories of hot kisses, passionate nips and pleasurable desire for each other, kept his heart steady and his mind focused so he wouldn't have to even think 'back when'. This was going to be a new scar that he would place his lips on as if applying a healing herb to it. They were going to move forward from this. She was going to wake up and he was going to tell her that he was sorry and he was going to hold her, press desperate kisses all over her and tell her that he loved her.

With rejuvenating determination, he placed his hand on the little splinter of shaft still there. His fingers stained with her blood, chilled from the external air, nimbly bore into the wound, latching onto the start of the arrowhead. He glanced at his girlfriend's face knotted in agony. This was enough to urge him to pull it. It took a couple of little pulls to slip it out and then with a hard, dexterous tug, it came out.

He threw the terrible thing across, his poor aim only resting inches away from the fire. Stormfly had crooned when the deed was done and Hiccup looked right up at her. Stormfly lowered her head and her snout gently touched her rider's face. Astrid's head lolled to the other side, facing Hiccup and he felt his breath hitched in guilt.

"I did this." He muttered feebly. However, he reached forward and placed his hand on her snout. "Easy girl."

Stormfly padded right behind Astrid, right next to Hiccup, and plopped down. She squawked at the boy and used her wing as if to gesture to her side. Hiccup, a little surprised at the Nadder's reaction, gently reclined their blonde companion against her side. Hiccup was then able to rush to his satchel, he pulled out his roll of bandages he had in case of a misstep with his flight suit or stunts. He found a canteen of water in Astrid's saddlebag and took a wad of the bandages. The first step was to clean the wound, which he did with the swiftest and gentlest touch that he didn't even know he had.

As Hiccup wrapped the gauze around, he remembered one of the first times he went out to test out his suit. Astrid was sitting by his bed, watching him assemble his leather gear on his body. She was playing with the flap on his helmet, amused by his innovative antics. When he told her that he was ready to go, half-expecting her to scold him for being such a reckless idiot, she pulled an entirely different reaction. She set the helmet aside and reached into the satchel that she had brought along with her that she used when she was about to go hunting with Stormfly. Without a single word, she pulled out a fresh roll of gauze and walked over to his saddle. Toothless was outside enjoying his morning cod. She put it in and closed the satchel. She approached him and placed her arms on his shoulders. She had said something in her witty, reproachful way but he was too mesmerized by the actual emotion in her eyes to catch her words. He looked into her eyes and saw the deepest care in those cerulean eyes.

Presently, Hiccup laughed, bitterly and pathetically at the irony as

he thought back to the memory and tied the strip of bandages in place. Blood was seeping through so quickly and Hiccup sighed in the deepest sorrow and regret. He gazed at his girlfriend and realized how barely clothed she was. The boy stood up and started to remove his soaked leathers that he completely ignored until now. Buckle by buckle, he felt the weight droop from his body and he threw the armor aside, forgotten. He pulled his soggy tunic over from his head. He picked up Astrid's tunic and his own, carefully lying it out beside the fire to dry. He put in a couple of more sticks to keep it going and he walked back over to his girlfriend. He slipped out of his trousers and then approached the blanket with a sudden nervousness he hadn't felt in years.

He remembered the argument. He remembered her snarl. He remembered his words. He remembered everything at that moment. And he couldn't help but deduce it too, look where they were now as the result. He exhaled, lips curled inwards in a remorseful frown. His full last sentence that he spoke to her echoed in his mind.

"_You will obey your chief!"_

Gods, he never raised his voice at her like that. Ever. And what was worse was that he, even for a moment, treated her like she was a subject and not his second-in-command. He released the breath he held and decided to ignore the ricochets of the morning. He knelt down timidly and raised the blanket that covered her body. He then slipped in underneath it, dropping the blanket like it was a feather. He wound his arms around his fianc  and pressed her cold body into his. Toothless then came over and plopped his head down right by Stormfly. He then opened his flank and covered his two human companions like an extra blanket. Hiccup removed one hand to gently stroke Toothless's head.

"Thanks bud." He whispered before finally regarding his girlfriend. She was still cold, wet and unconscious, also in a severe amount of pain and he just had no idea what to do but just talk. "Wake up, Astrid, please my love."

Words, his rambles, tumbled out of his pleading mouth. He kissed her forehead.

"Please, I'm so sorry." He begged. He kissed the crown of her head. He then lapsed into an eerie silence. The fire crackled, its flames fluttered another burst of sparks into the air. He watched the fire dance, though scarcely fed, it was alive.

He then looked back at his beloved, he reached down with one hand and tilted her face upwards by his hand. His thumb stroked the thin, pink lips and he leaned in. He was relieved to find his kiss met with some warmth even if there wasn't reciprocated action. He pulled back, just a little so he could press his forehead against hers. His hand still remained on her face but then he withdrew his face from hers and leaned, exhaustedly against Stormfly's flank. Astrid's head had fallen against his collarbone.

The silence dragged on until he found himself humming absently. The melody took him to a strange land of happier days. A boy, a girl and their dragons, lying lazily on an island they had discovered. His mind had resonated the sweet fluttering of notes that came from a simple bone whistle but also from intricate, thin fingers that

belonged to his wonderful girlfriend.

"Wake up soon, milady." He whispered, again. This time his voice laced with a little more wistful and hopeful tones. He tried to chuckle. "Mom is teaching me how to dance, practically drilling how to waltz. You better wake up, because I don't want all those countless, long hours go to waste when I could've spent it discovering new islands or taking you on a wonderful date."

Complete silence. He started to ghost her face again with his lips.

"Milady, please." He whispered. He stopped his caresses and leaned his head towards hers. Guilt stabbed his heart again and he wanted to scream. "Gods, they were only supposed to be nightmares. We're supposed to be married soon, run a village together, start a family if we wanted too, defy every tradition possible—I need you, Astrid. I need you to make fun of my flailing gestures, to punch me when I've done the stupid thing, to support me when I need it the most, to—"

"Babe," came the hoarse whisper. Hiccup gasped and kept his mouth shut just to be sure he didn't hear what he only wanted to hear. He looked down at her, her eyes still closed and he almost lost it at that point. Now his mind was playing tricks on him. "You muttonhead."

He looked back and blue met green. He laughed in relief and kissed her, tossing all carefulness into the air. Astrid mustered all her strength to return his kiss with equal fervor and her hand even went up to rake through the clingy mop of his auburn hair. When he pulled away, he was about to open his mouth to apologize but she was still his quick Astrid.

"Don't, Babe," she refused. Her voice still laced with pain. She breathed heavily for a moment. "I— shouldn't have flown—off like that, I'm sorry."

He held the hand that had just left his hair and kissed the white knuckles.

"How about—we're both sorry." He reasoned. Astrid nodded.

"I'll work with—that—for now." She said, still weak but starting to sound like his tough, right hand again. Her head rested back on his collarbone again. She kissed the skin sweetly. "I'm—right here, babe."

Hiccup kissed her forehead with equal love.

"You're not going anywhere." He mumbled against her soft skin. He heard Astrid hum and slip back into a more comfortable sleep. Hiccup spent the remainder of that night on vigil, praying for the storm to break, praying for those freak attackers to be swept away with the viscous waves, praying for the recovery of his sweet right hand and praying for countless more days when he would lose himself in the honeyed support of his hatchet.

The gods were merciful because that next week, her tunic was removed and he kissed the stitching on her right shoulder. His lips lingered

there until he felt two warm hands fold against his cheeks, pulling his face up and unto the waiting lips of his beloved. The flashback images of a lifeless Astrid flew out the window as he lost himself willingly in that kiss. The nightmares he endured were still figments of his addled imagination.

The end.

****Please, click that button. ****

8. Communication

****Okay, hello guys. Sorry, I took a bit of a break from writing. I had a combo of writer's block, attending festivals and playing a gig in another state which kept me from writing. I'm working on the Hiccstrid wedding so that will show up pretty soon. But here's another one-shot that was in my head today as saw HTTYD 2 for the third time today. This one takes place before the Delegation one shot that wrote a while back. And this was inspired by a request to have Hiccup jealous of Eret. In some aspects, it sort of escaped me and turned into its own thing, I do apologize. Anyway, thanks for all the great responses to my previous oneshots and I hope you enjoy this one. As usual, you are welcome to leave me requests, I'd love to keep these things going. Thanks!****

****Disclaimer, I own nothing.

****~Soldier78~****

Communication

There were days when Astrid was frustrated with her fiancé's busy schedule. But then, there were days when she was completely angry about his hasty apology when she confronted him about his lack of sleep, lack of flying and lack of—well, everything he enjoyed.

She couldn't exactly accuse of him intentionally blowing her off. She accused his mastery with obliviousness which was the cause of her internal rising rage. Nonetheless, she kissed him when they were spared a moment in peace. It was always quick coupled with a quick, but meaningful 'I love you' before they would be separated the entire day. They would be with each other again at night, when it was time for bed but they hadn't had a night to themselves in Thor knows how long because Hiccup was completely tired. Astrid never minded that because she knew how taxing a chief could be, it was the fact that he was too tired to even scratch Toothless on the head or indulge his beloved with a warm kiss. He was, once again, swamping himself when he could probably pass some of his issues to her, his second in command, like he promised.

There was a lot of things Astrid was frustrated at but she was able to keep her turmoil under control when she arrived at the Great Hall to grab a quick bite before teaching class at the Academy.

"Fine morning, isn't it Astrid?"

Astrid looked up to see Eret, Son of Eret, approaching with his bright smile that charmed every maiden on the island, excluding

Astrid. However, she had to admit that he had a pretty decent grin.

"Hey Eret," she said with a nod. She shoveled some eggs into her mouth and swallowed. "Are you actually going to show up for training today?"

The burly man nodded with a roll of his eyes.

"O'course, lass, 'cause you're teaching. Correct?" He jested. Astrid nodded.

"Yup, which means there will be a lot of survival training." Astrid threatened. That type of lesson always equaled to groans from the recruits but Astrid was very persistent in making sure that these people knew that dragons won't always be beneath them flying. There were even times when you'd be separated and it would take both of you to rejoin each other.

Eventually, Astrid finished her breakfast and made her way to the large door. Eret joined her and the two were engaged in casual conversation as if they were friends their entire lives.

* * *

><p>Hiccup trusted her. He trusted her with everything he had. Yet, something violent stabbed his heart as he watched Astrid and Eret walk out of the hall together, laughing. It was completely weird, and a little hurtful, because Astrid rarely laughed when Hiccup wasn't involved. It was one of the things Hiccup treasured about his girlfriend, he felt honored and loved when she lifted her veil of tough and impassive demeanor whenever they were together, alone. He felt very important when he knew he was the only one to see the goofy, sweet and compassionate side of his girlfriend. Now, with her laughing with this Son of Eret, Hiccup felt lost and hurt. Was this a sign? Did he do something wrong?<p>

The image of Astrid cozying up to Eret flashed before his eyes way too often during the day. It distracted him from his meetings, his patrol and his desk work. Every time he heard Astrid's melodious laughter, he pictured Eret right beside her. He tried not to see Astrid mocking Eret's gesturing habits. He tried not see her taking a section of his hair and braiding it. He tried not to see her punching him and then kissing him.

Hiccup chucked his pencil aside and he sat back in his chair. He looked outside, the sun had been set for a long time. Astrid would be home soon from her evening patrol. He closed his book with a huff and uncharacteristically folded his arms against his chest. He bit his lip for a moment.

To his right, he heard a sad croon. Hiccup looked over to see Toothless waddle up to him with a tilted head, confused by his agitated rider's mood.

"It's okay, bud." Hiccup sighed, scratching his dragon's head. He frowned. "How do you ask your girlfriend if she's thinking about other guys for her without making it sound like she's cheating?"

For a comedic moment, Toothless glared at his thoughtless rider.

Hiccup pursed his lips. Just then, footsteps ascended the stairs. Astrid stopped what she was doing which was unclipping her hood from her spaulders.

"You're home." She said as if surprised to see him at his presence at his desk at this hour.

"Yeah, didn't have an evening meeting so I just came home to do some work." He said, glancing disdainfully at his scattered desk. Astrid hummed as she proceeded with taking off her spaulders next. She placed her outer clothes in a crate she used until she would officially move into his room. To Hiccup, her response tonight was bitter and impassive, normally, she would jump at the chance to distract him and he would allow it. He was actually sort of hoping for that tonight.

Instead, Astrid slipped out of her boots and skirt and released her hair from its braid. She decided to slip beneath the covers and lie on her side.

"Are you okay, milady?" Hiccup asked, a little concerned about her odd attitude.

"I'm fine, just tired." Astrid reported as she closed her eyes. Hiccup frowned and played with his charcoal pencil for a bit. He steeled his jaw suddenly, her eyes narrowed and he lifted himself from his chair. Within seconds, he shed his single boot and removed his prosthetic so he could join his girlfriend. He pulled up the blanket and slipped in. He snuggled up to his girlfriend, arm draped around her waist and his nose nuzzling itself in the blonde locks and the nape of her neck.

"Hiccup." She moaned, indignantly when he started to press kisses along her neck and the exposed skin near her shoulder. His hand started to rub, teasingly underneath her tunic. Astrid grasped his wandering hand to still him. "No, Hiccup."

He deflated, saddened by not just the rejection of intimacy, but the rejection of her response to his touch. What had he done wrong?

"What's wrong, milady?" he asked, not giving up as he made sure his breath ghosted by her ear.

"Nothing." She said, but Hiccup wouldn't have it. To torture him, the image of Eret and Astrid laughing together, flew into his mind, so he continued to kiss her pale skin, nuzzle his nose against the places he previously kissed. He felt an elbow into his gut and a cold response which he had blinked twice at because it was so unlike Astrid. "I said no, Hiccup!"

He wheezed and sighed, removing himself completely and lying on his back.

"Whatever I did, Astrid." He whispered under his breath. "I'm sorry."

Astrid groaned, sat up and glared at him.

"Hiccup," she said with a sigh. "We need to talk."

"Gods, you're breaking up with me?"

Now her head snapped to him, eyes narrowed in daggered eyes.

"What? No." She said sternly as she confronted her boyfriend finally. "What the Hel made you think that Hiccup?"

Her sky blue eyes turned to ice as she scrutinized her pathetic boyfriend. Her arms were folded, too with a cold scowl written on her face to intimidate any man who dared cross her. Hiccup sighed and sat up, his back against his headboard so he could look directly at his girlfriend's vicious and, possibly disappointed, scowl.

"Iâ€|" Hiccup couldn't even make himself lie to her face. Not even with the disapproving scowl that was a warning shot before she would flip her to violence, it was because he couldn't lie to her because he loved her way too much to be dishonest in anyway. "I saw you with Eret today."

"And?" Her brow was now raised and it really made Hiccup gulp, however, five years of encountering her fierce glower, trained him from faltering in front of her. "Andâ€|" I saw you talking to him, laughing with him."

"And?" she repeated. Hiccup exhaled sharply.

"I was jealous okay?" he confessed with knitted brows and a frustrated glint in his eyes. "Because he made you laugh and I haven't been able to get even a smile out of you in the past few days. Because you talked to him and we haven't said anything to each other except 'good night' or 'I love you". So, I was jealous."

"Soâ€|" treating me like some toy rather than an actual human being was your way of saying 'I want to talk to you'?" She inquired, coldly. Hiccup's eyes widened, realizing the mistake he had just committed a few minutes ago.

"Oh Astrid, no." He started to plead. "I didn't meanâ€|" look, I'm just so confused and clueless and-"

Suddenly, Astrid unfolded her arms and jabbed him with her index finger, right in the chest.

"Listen you Muttonhead," she said sternly. Hiccup bravely looked in her the eye. To him, he was nearly lost in the gorgeous icy orbs. "I do not think of Eret in the same way that I think of you, I am mad with you about something else entirely and I love you, always."

"Something else entirely?" He dared to squeak. Astrid removed her hand and folded her arms again. She nodded. "Okayâ€|" tell me, what did I do wrong this time?"

"_This _time," she started to lecture. "You're swamping yourself to the point that it is not only affecting you and your habits, it is affecting the people you love and it is affecting the village. You are spreading yourself to thin which makes it harder for jobs to be done with the greatest quality. Instead, you tend to focus on

quantity. Does that make sense?"

"So what are you suggesting, milady?" Hiccup asked after studying her words for a moment. He looked into her eyes for guidance this time, for the advice she always seemed to have for him. Astrid reached out and instead of smacking him on the back of the head like she should have done several times tonight, she started to stroke his hair lovingly. Her fingers raked through his auburn locks and suddenly, both her hands were at the nape of his neck, adding yet another braid to his collection.

"You have a few people who are willing to serve the Chief." Astrid reminded him. "Maybe your mom can handle some of the dragon-related affairs and I can help you handle some of the non-dragon related items on your list."

"But you already work too much-"

"My work is like a nighttime patrol on Stormfly," Astrid informed. "I am willing to take on more tasks, babe. Let me help you."

Her hand was suddenly on his chest, his heart pulsing against her soft hand. He looked in adoration at his girlfriend and he covered his hand over hers, keeping it against his thrumming heart.

"I love you." He said earnestly. His voice then cracked as he replayed his foul treatment towards her. He took his other hand and brushed some of her bangs aside in order to gaze into her sky blue eyes. "I'm so sorry, Astrid. I'll never act like that again."

"If you do," Astrid warned but the tone of her voice was playful. "You'll be missing something rather important to both of us."

Hiccup smiled and pressed a kiss to her forehead.

"Then, I better keep my hands to myself." He said, breathing against her sweet, alabaster skin. He leaned back, hands to his own self to which Astrid groaned and gripped him by the tunic. His eyes turned mischievous with his grin to match, a combination Astrid never grew tired of. Her pull towards him instigated a rather suggestive comment. "Unless, one of my tasks is to indulge my fiancÃ©?"

He was above her by now, lips pressed against hers in smaller, heated kisses.

"Task, huh?" She whispered between kisses. Hiccup grunted, his lips teasingly brushing over the exposed skin on her neck.

"More like a relaxation." He mumbled against her neck. Astrid smiled and kissed the top of his head, tenderly.

The end.

**Please, click that button. **

9. Health

**Okay, soâ€¦I'm struggling with the wedding one-shot and this came out instead. There were a few requests that suggested that Hiccup got

sick and soâ€|this was born. I wouldn't place this under drama or anything, just a large amount of fluff that I never knew I'd actually write out. So this story sort of escaped me but I still had fun playing with the dialogue a bit. So, as usual, my wonderful comrades, thank you for all the feedback in the previous chapter, I'll do my damndest to get that wedding one up before I go on vacation next week. It'll hit me, sometime, hopefully. Okay, enough o' that, please enjoy this next one!**

**Disclaimer, I own nothing. **

~Soldier78~

Health

Astrid had been sitting up in bed, reviewing the newest additions to the Book of Dragons. The book rested on her bent up knees, the candle on the table by her side of the bed was freshly lit and danced peacefully. She had her head against the post of the headboard, the blanket drawn over her upright knees.

Her boyfriend entered the room some few minutes later after she flipped the page. He was unbuckling his armor on his way to his desk.

"Evening, milady." He greeted as he had often. Astrid glanced up from the page to regard her tired partner.

"Hey babe," she returned with a small smile pulling at her lips. He lifted the leather off his shoulders and gently placed it on the chair by his desk. Astrid watched, mildly fascinated in the movement of his lean but firm arms like any other girlfriend would admire their boyfriend, but she noticed something off with the way he sat down, ungracefully on his side of the bed. She noticed a more tired look on his face than usual. She watched him run his hands over his face and give an uncharacteristic shudder. She raised a brow, lowered her knees and closed her book. "Tough day?"

Hiccup gave an undignified snort and reached down to pull off his prosthetic and boot.

"Just the usual," he replied offhandedly. He paused for a moment, grimaced when he tried to suddenly right himself.

"Hiccup, are you-"

"I'm fine." He answered quickly. "Just a small headache."

His hands undid his bent and he set it aside next to his boot and prosthetic. With mastered precision, he snuck under the covers and laid on his side. He propped himself by his elbow so he could talk casually with his girlfriend as she studied.

"So what did Fishlegs record this time?" Hiccup asked, his hand gently resting on Astrid's shin. Lovingly, he ran his hand up and down the skin. He gazed up at her and was smitten with the silly grin on her face.

"The Alpha thing, the Night Fury's back fins and that blue glow thing Toothless did," Astrid paused for a moment, her smile pulled into a

bit of a disgusted scowl. "â€| and dragon leavings."

Hiccup chuckled.

"Hey, it's a useful way in identifying dragons." Hiccup retorted, hand suddenly still right between her shin and foot. His fingernails absently scraped along her skin to which was brought to his attention when he felt her other foot kick off his hand. He jerked his hand away and grabbed it with his other, glaring at her. "Hey!"

"That's annoying." She glowered at him. Hiccup chuckled. It wasn't every day that Astrid would expose her ticklish side. Hiccup knew she had certain spots and that she hated it when he used them against her. He smirked, though, knowing better.

"Put the book down." He told her. Astrid gave him a fierce glare but Hiccup maintained himself in front of her. She eventually gave up and placed the book under the bed in its usual spot when it wasn't entirely needed.

"Okay, what do you want?" Astrid jokingly demanded as she laid down right next to him. Her chief smiled wickedly and moved closer.

"Just a kiss." He whispered before closing in on the lips he found so soft and inviting. Their lips met in a gentle kiss, her arms wrapped around his shoulders as he hovered his weight above her. Just before it could change, Hiccup drew away suddenly.

He turned his head away and coughed right into his arm. Astrid, not disgusted by his germs, just looked up at him in concern. Her hand gently ran through his hair as he recovered from his fit.

"Are you sure it's just a headache, babe?" She asked him. Hiccup nodded and bent down again, this time planting a lingering, tender kiss on her cheek before finally lying back down next to her. His arms invited her to curl up to his side. She molded herself against his side, her head resting softly on his chest. Her ear could pick up the steady rhythm of his heart which lulled her to sleep. Hiccup folded his arms around her slender body and kept her glued to him. She had blown her candle out beforehand and Hiccup did the same to his on his table. "Love you, babe."

"Love you too, milady." He said, he cleared his throat however and Astrid waited for him to fall asleep.

When she recognized his steady breathing when he was a sleep, she lifted her head and gently moved the hand that was on his abdomen. She reached up, brush a stray lock of that shaggy auburn hair she adored, away and placed her hand on his forehead. She nearly withdrew it in shock at how hot it was.

Without a single word and as silent as possible, she withdrew herself from Hiccup's side upon her reluctance. She crept downstairs, acknowledging the woman who was still by the hearth.

"Oh, hello dear." Valka greeted her future daughter-in-law with a warm smile. "I thought you went to bed."

"Hiccup has a fever." Astrid reported as she gathered a bowl and a rag. She filled the bowl with the water from the bucket on the

counter. She then placed a clean rag inside to let it soak. "He might need to have a day off."

"I will tell Gobber first thing in the morning." Valka offered.
"We'll cover everything."

"Okay, I'll ask for his notes in the morning--"

"No, dear. You need to stay with him." Valka informed. Astrid raised a brow.

"But I'm--"

"Do you really think he's going to take a sick day on his own accord?" The chief's mother had questioned. Astrid nodded her head a few times in agreement to the argument. "Much less he'll abide by it the entire day."

Astrid laughed.

"That's for sure." She commented dryly.

"Don't worry dear," the older woman added when she caught the glum, guilty expression on the blonde's face. "It's nothing we can't handle."

Astrid nodded her head and headed up stairs.

"Thank you, Val." She thanked earnestly. The future mother-in-law smiled, accepting the praise modestly and Astrid retreated back upstairs to prepare for her own conflict in the morning. If there was one trait those two had in common, it was stubbornness.

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up that next morning with a searing headache, a scratchy throat and sudden dizziness when he lifted his head. It was then he felt something cool on his forehead and he gently touched it. A soaked rag.<p>

He turned his head to see his girlfriend asleep, her head positioned at the junction between his neck and shoulder. She moved last night and this was obviously why. He blinked and tried to remove himself from the bed, taking the rag from his forehead but a strong grip from around his abdomen kept him pinned to the bed.

"Nuh-uh, Hiccup." Astrid had murmured, eyes closed for a brief moment before those daring blue eyes opened and stared right at him.

"But I have to--"

She sat herself up, back against the headboard. She took the rag from his hand, turned over and soaked it in the bowl at her table. She wrung it out and tenderly rested it on Hiccup's head. His forehead creased with a brow raised in confusion.

"You've got a fever and you are going to stay in bed until you get better." She ordered him. Hiccup shook his head, attempting to move but her hand shot out and seized his arm. "No, Hiccup."

"But -"

"Valka and Gobber will deal with the village today. I gave them your notes from yesterday and they are already out there."

"Gobber?!" Hiccup shot up. He glared at his girlfriend. "Do you remember the last time Gobber was handed chieftain duties?!"

"Yes, he sunk a ship and named a baby girl Magnus." Astrid recalled, sardonically. Her arms were crossed. "That's why your mother is in charge."

"Still." Hiccup tried to argue. Astrid sighed.

"Hiccup, you're sick. You need to rest and get better so you can go out there tomorrow." She immediately stood her ground. "The village can't afford to waste a day trying to make sure the chief can stand without falling onto the ground."

"But I'm -"

Astrid frowned and straddled his lap. One hand gently cupped his cheek while the other played with the fabric of his tunic.

"Please Hiccup," she begged of him. This was entirely un-Astrid-like but, due to their familiarity with each other, Hiccup knew when he needed to stop when she used this on him. It meant that she was far beyond fighting a battle that was ridiculous and that she was completely serious with this situation. Hiccup couldn't say no when she pleaded with him. "You need to rest. The village can wait a day."

He eventually surrendered and gave that nod in affirmation which earned him a kiss on the forehead. He watched her remove herself from his waist and he suddenly missed the contact. Yet, he laid back down when she gestured him to and closed his eyes as he felt the rag on his forehead.

"One condition though," he rasped. His eyes opened slightly to look at his girlfriend. "You'll stay with me."

"Of course," Astrid said with a beaming smile. "Your mom ordered me to anyway."

Hiccup chuckled and looked to his left when he heard a draconic croon. He saw Toothless ambling up to him in concern.

"Sorry, bud." He hoarsely spoke to him as he rubbed his best friend's head. "I'm trapped here today."

Astrid chuckled while Toothless nuzzled his rider's hand.

"You know I can go rogue and just leave you here right?" She crossed her arms in a jesting form. Hiccup chuckled.

"Gives me the good chance of escaping to do my job," Hiccup argued. He then glanced at Toothless. "Or worse, flying."

Astrid shook her head at her boyfriend's refutation and reached over

to squeeze his hand.

"I'll go make you some broth." She offered kindly. Hiccup nodded and Astrid looked at Toothless. "Make sure he stays in bed."

Toothless sat on his hind legs, raised his head and kept a watchful vigil on his rider like a true guard. Astrid smirked and retreated downstairs to prepare some food for the sickly one.

* * *

><p>Astrid had brought up the bowl of broth with a spoon, lost in her own addled thoughts when she heard a bewildered croon. Her eyes widened and she rushed up the last few steps. She saw her boyfriend's eyes closed but his hand was patting Toothless's snout.<p>

"I hopeâ€|you're proud of me, Dad." She swore she heard him whisper. "Mom always reminds me that you would."

Astrid stood still, heart in between utter heartbreak for the delusion and admiration of the truthful words the young Chief spoke.

"Alsoâ€|I finally askedâ€|her to marry me."

Her heart fluttered but then she approached the bed, returning to business with the steaming broth. She looked at her boyfriend who seemed to settle down and his arm was back to his own side. Astrid cleared her throat.

"Hiccup?" Her voice echoed in the loft. Toothless looked up with interest at Astrid but soon resorted to nudging Hiccup awake. Hiccup, now jostled awake, propped himself on his elbows but hissed when the full pain of the headache came on with his sudden movements. Astrid chuckled softly and sat on the bed. "Easy there, Chief."

Hiccup slowly sat himself up, back reclined against the headboard.

"Oh Gods, Astrid, I just had the strangest dream." Hiccup said as Astrid handed him his bowl of broth. His voice was still raspy but showed signs of his usual vibrancy. Astrid smiled, tenderly and reached out to brush his bangs aside. "Dad was sitting right by my bed, I was talking to him, telling him about the reconstruction and the modifications. I even told him about us."

His beaming face suddenly turned crestfallen, causing Astrid to tilt her head in a mixture of concern and puzzlement about his thoughts.

"Do youâ€|do you think he'd be proud of me?" He asked her. She saw his gorgeous emerald eyes filled with an innocent look that held both wonder and doubt. Astrid acted quick and reached out to stroke the auburn mane at the nape of his neck as he fed himself a spoonful of broth.

"Absolutely, Babe." She assured, her fingers toyed with the scruffy tips of his hair while gently massaging his neck. He nearly moaned in the pleasant sensation. "You've done a wonderful job with everything. The whole village is proud of you. Your Mom, Toothless in his own

dragon way,"

Toothless snorted in approval as he understood Astrid's words completely. Both young adults looked at the Night Fury and smiled tenderly at him. Toothless nodded as if urging his two favorite humans to continue their conversation. Astrid lovingly looked back at her boyfriend.

"You already know I'm proud of you." She hummed, Hiccup gently smiled and reached out to stroke her own bangs. His fingers grazed her forehead and briefly skimmed her ear. He stared into her sky blue eyes, feeling the same floating sensation he felt when he cruised with Toothless in the sky. His hand finally cupped her cheek, his thumb stroking the smooth, pale skin.

"I know I don't say this nearly enough," Hiccup informed with solemnity. Astrid gazed at him. "I've never been good with words."

Astrid giggled at her boyfriend's struggle.

"Just say whatever is on your mind, Babe." She offered. Hiccup smiled, a new rush of pride and confidence seeping into his veins. In his raspy, but enduring voice, he spoke truthfully to his fiancÃ©.

"I'm soâ€¦thankful that the Gods have given me the chance to spend an eternity with you," he marveled. His thumb kept massaging the skin tenderly. "I know, it may seem that I'll spend more time with Toothless or with the village than you butâ€¦you, I want you to know that you hold me together."

"Hiccup-"

His hand suddenly moved and his finger was placed against her lips to silence her.

"Nothing compares to how much I love you, Astrid. I can't wait to spend every day for the rest of our lives with you." Hiccup said with so much love and passion. Astrid nearly cried at his confession but bit her lip and allowed her eyes to grow teary.

"I love you so much, Hiccup." She spoke up. Hiccup smiled and caressed her cheek again. He had set his bowl down before his heart's declaration and he reached out to pull her towards him. The two bodies slipped underneath the covers and just simply held each other. They were both on their sides, facing each other. Astrid's head was pressed against his chest, his arms wrapped tightly around her and his chin on the crown of her head. Their legs tangled with each other's.

* * *

><p>Later that evening, Valka noticed the dying embers of a fire when she entered the Haddock house. She took off her outside wear and gently placed it on the dining table. She decided, because of the eerie silence, to go check up on her son and her son's beloved. She crept up the stairs quietly, assuming that the reason for the silence was that they were asleep.<p>

Though she counted on it, nothing made her heart warm and smile wider than seeing the duo wrapped in each other's arms under a fur blanket. The candles weren't even lit, so they were probably asleep for hours by now. She then noticed something black, sitting at Hiccup's side but his eyes trained on the two of them, guarding them both as they peacefully slept.

Valka remembered that feeling of the lover's embrace. It had been so long ago but the wistfulness of the past was beaten into submission because nothing made a mother happier than seeing her son, happy, smiling the same wide grin she had fallen in love with more than twenty years ago.

"_Ye'd be very proud o' these two, Stoick."_ Was the one thought that came to her head before departing down the stairs to mind her own business.

The end.

****Please, click that button.****

10. Tradition

****Okay, so I started off with a little historical basics of a Viking Wedding, all information curtesy of the finest Viking website I've browsed, the Viking Answer Lady. Thenâ€the plot sort of strayed and soâ€this came to be. Yes, I did base the actual wedding off a certain pirate film. I guess my brain subconsciously said "yo, everyone writes the wedding, put yer own flair on it" and boom! Complete randomness with an army of marauders that seem to never die despite all of the misfortune the Berk riders give them, making an appearance. Anyhow, here is the long awaited one-shot and as usual, thank you for all the kind feedback and please enjoy this oneshot. You guys are awesome! ****

****Disclaimer, I own nothing.

****~Soldier78~****

Tradition

Traditions are a customary pattern of beliefs and/or practices that were meant to be passed on from generation to generation. Traditions defined a culture. It was an ideal that bonded all the individuals in one culture in some way. They could be found in religion, in society, in trade, in music. Traditions were an entity of a culture.

And the Vikings had the tools for culture. They worshipped the same pagan gods, albeit favoring different ones over others. They had their own hierarchy of thralls, simpletons, nobility and the jarl, or chief. They had their trades; they were crafty woodworkers, excellent sword makers and unbeatable shipbuilders in their time. They had their music, the Ærhus flute crafted from bone or wood or the stringed lur among other such instruments entertained Vikings. Poetry was also a favorite pastime. It was tradition to wash on Laugardagr, which literally translates to Wash-Day. It was also tradition to hold weddings on FrjÃ;dagr, or Frigg's Day and with a Viking wedding, that was the haven for all things traditions. There was a system to secure

the betrothal, there was a procedure to prepare the Bride and groom for their special day, there were customary prayers and spiritual liquids to bless the marriage and there was the jolly feast with even more steps to present the new wedded couple—and then, as all of us fans know by now, there was the tradition of a public consummation.

Both Hiccup and Astrid woke up that morning on a Frigg's day near the end of summer. The shift in the weather changed the leaves on the tree to red, orange and brown. The air was starting to get a little niprier. But it was all part of the lifestyle of a tough crowd like these Vikings. These two Vikings, separated yesterday because of the tradition of 'bad luck to see the groom before the wedding', woke up that morning, their hearts terribly missing each other's company but relieved to remember that they would reunite and their union would be permanently cemented the next time they saw each other.

They were both decked out in the traditional Viking wedding garb. Astrid had to surrender her kransen to her mother, who put it away until Astrid would give it to a daughter of her own. She had argued to keep her red tunic, shoulder pads and skirt combination and was successful in that but today, she'd be wearing different attire. She was hustled off to the bath house where she would be ritually 'washed away' of her maiden status. Astrid had to bite her lip to keep her from laughing when the more-experienced women lectured her about how to be a wife and how to please her husband. Astrid twitched uncomfortably when she had to plunge into the cold water to complete this ridiculous tradition. Then, as they dolled her up, they placed that ridiculously looking bridal-crown on her head to replace the kransen.

Like Astrid, Hiccup had to take some ceremonial bath and, because the groom didn't have a visual token of bachelor status, he had to go sneak into an ancestor's grave and take the ancestral sword to present to his bride. However, Hiccup felt a little uncertain about giving his axe-wielding Vikingess access to yet another weapon she could use to cause bodily harm when she was upset with him, and he knew she will lose her temper with him and his antics. Nonetheless, he had the goofiest grin on his face at even the subtle reminder that she would be his wife at the end of the day. So, on that cheery note, he trudged on with the traditions, wishing he was somewhere in the skies with Toothless but, physically present to the males who were arguing about a certain way to—er—make a woman happy. It took Spitelout's words 'you'll need an axe, to show her you are the master of your marriage' to finally shoot down that tradition. Then, he was dressed with the sword attached to his hip to present to his bride. His heart raced with anticipation, excitement and nervousness.

The ceremony went off without a single hitch. Hiccup watched his beloved approach him in a simple, yet gorgeous blue dress. The bridal crown, made from braided twigs with woven flowers and leaves, fixed perfectly on her golden crown of silky tresses. He looked forward to remove that crown and run his fingers through her wonderful strands. He smiled, goofily, just thinking about it.

Astrid admired him as well, he was dressed in a fancier green tunic and fine brown trousers. Despite several attempts to get his unruly auburn locks tamed, he was still the rugged, handsome man she was completely in love with. She, like Hiccup, looked forward to run her

hands through his shaggy hair and placing another small braid in it as if to solidify, in their own whacked up way, their union.

Gothi honored the Gods and Goddesses, asking for their blessing on this well-matched couple. The ceremonial water were dashed on them, little droplets trickling down their faces which made them giggle, giddily. Their hands clasped and it was soon time for the vows. Hiccup was ready to open his mouth and pronounce his undying love for the strong, beautiful woman in front of him.

However, as some folks have voiced throughout years of living life, shit happens. It was just then that some marauding band of dragon riders soared straight into the village. The Vikings dispersed, mounted up and gathered weapons to defend their home. Hiccup rolled his eyes and made a sarcastic remark and then looked at Astrid who was already mounted on Stormfly, dutifully awaiting the Chief's orders. To others, she looked like she was steely-eyed and ready for battle, but Hiccup saw the look of aggravation alit in her eyes. However, she was focused, just one of the ways he loved her.

"Strike from the right?" Hiccup suggested, Astrid smirked, knowing, that despite it was a mere suggestion, it was his way of ordering her around. It gave her an opening to judge and make him reconsider if she made a valid point. Yet, this time, she found no challenges and gave a firm nod.

"Hold on," she stilled quickly. She hopped off of Stormfly. Hiccup glanced at her, she pulled something out of her saddle bag. "Think you can remove my crown, I need to tie my hair back so it won't get in the way."

Hiccup chuckled and removed it. He set it hastily down on the table that held the items for the ceremony. Astrid successfully pulled her hair into a messy ponytail and hopped right on Stormfly once again. She blew her fianc  a kiss before lifting off into battle. Hiccup watched in awe as she wielded her battle axe and maneuvered skillfully around the flock of rogue dragon riders.

Hiccup joined the fray soon enough and swung around to find the leader. Berk was holding its ground good enough, the marauders were completely amateur on dragons compared to the Hooligans. He had Toothless swoop up, close to the targeted dragon, disorienting it. The leader huffed and tried to get his mount under control to which Hiccup took full advantage of the pause. Toothless zoomed past again and the dragon lurched downwards.

Yet, the dragon eventually used his full strength to fire at Toothless. The Night Fury dodged but Hiccup felt the rush of fire a little too close. He grimaced and told Toothless to take a quick dive to pull himself together. It was then he saw several other dragons come to the aid of the pirate leader. Hiccup grunted a curse when he found himself flanked on both sides. He would have to engage in direct conflict so he made to withdraw the sword, meant for his intended, from his belt. Prepared to unsheathe it, his move was delayed when he found a spray of hot fire, knock two dragons out of range. She swung her battle axe at one of the armed men who swung his sword. The blade got caught in the deep curve of her axe and she disarmed him quickly before giving him a kick to his helmet which sent him plummeting. That dragon went after him.

Hiccup, not entirely surprised by her quick movements but surprised at her well-timed assistance, smiled at her.

"Couldn't have come at a better time, milady!" he shouted over the winds of battle. Astrid smirked and she glanced at the leader who was a few yards away and ready to charge. Quickly, she unattached the sword from her belt and tossed it to him. He caught it by the scabbard with improved accuracy and he looked at it.

"Your sword, babe." She said and he immediately understood. He held it firmly against his saddle as he tossed her the sword he had withdrawn earlier.

"Milady." He said. Astrid looked at it and then at him.

"My own Inferno?" She grinned at him. Hiccup nodded. She smirked and with a snap of Stormfly's wings, the Nadder and Rider banked around to take on the approaching leader. Hiccup was ready to cover her when he saw her rush past, spraying Zibbleback gas in front of the man and then having Stormfly bank and fly back to ignite the gas.

With a sickening crackle, it exploded and Hiccup held his breath, hoping that his girlfriend got out of the fire quickly.

"Atta girl, Stormfly!" he heard her shout, victoriously as she swooped up past Hiccup. Hiccup shook his head at her and flew after her. He handed her one of his cartridges.

"You know, all we need is give each other our oath rings, say our vows and someone to say we're married." Hiccup stated. Astrid chuckled as they approached a group of pirates.

"You can wait right?" she questioned.

"I dunno," He spotted Gobber on Grump joining them. "Hey Gobber!"

"Aye, Chief?" the blacksmith called back.

"Marry us!" He requested. Astrid and Gobber both looked at him like he was crazy.

"I don't think now's the best time, babe!" Astrid flatly scolded.

"Eh, c'mon, we've traded our swords, asked the Gods for our blessing." Hiccup urged. Astrid contemplated for a moment before finally nodding. She looked at Gobber.

"Gobber, marry us!" She shouted at him.

"Thor almighty, yeh kids are a piece o' work." Gobber huffed, indigently. He smiled though and nodded. "Aye, we're gathered 'ere t'day!"

It was then a fireball shot at Gobber and he swung right out of the range, just narrowly missing the blow. Grump fired back with his own blast and Gobber cleared his throat.

"We're gathered 'ere t'day, t'bless the union, _finally_, between our

Chief an'-Yeh wan' a piece o' this, yeh half-troll!"

Whack!

Astrid and Hiccup glanced at each other and they both flew to assist Gobber.

"Astrid Hofferson," Hiccup began as he flanked one of the enemy. His blade crashed against his axe and Toothless fired a nice plasma blast at the dragon's side. "I love you, I've always have-Toothless, on your left-"

Boom!

"Astrid," Hiccup resumed. "Do you wish for me to become your husband, to have and to hold, through sickness and in health until we both reach Valhalla or Helheim?"

Astrid dove out of reach of an arrow and Stormfly squawked, blasting her own magnesium burst at the attacker.

"I do!" she shouted over the loud clashing of metal and dragons, "Hiccup, I love you so much- Stormfly, spine shot!"

Squawk!

"Do you, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, wish for me to become your wife, to have and to hold, through sickness and in health until we both reach Valhalla or Helheim?" Astrid said, though she was a bit winded from the action. Hiccup smiled, enraptured and he nodded.

"Of course, I do." He vowed. Gobber, who had heard the exchange, chimed back in.

"Right, I suppose rings are out of the-"

"Babe, here!" Gobber watched Astrid toss a small ring to her husband as she swooped past him to take care of a dragon tailing on his rear. Hiccup caught without effort and placed it on his left ring finger. He then reached into his pocket and when Astrid turned to resituate and assess the current status of the battle, Hiccup sidled up to her.

"Milady." He offered in his gentlemanly fashion. She was close enough to let him slip it onto her finger. Astrid smirked and the two were separated by an incoming fleet of bloodthirsty dragons. Gobber came in to assist the two and to end the ceremony.

"Righty-o, I now pronounce yeh-" Once again, Gobber was interrupted by some random strike to his right and he flew right out of the way. He shook his head and smacked the pirate against his helmet with his Warhammer prosthetic. The man plummeted and the dragon went after him. Gobber sighed in relief and returned to his duty. "I now pronounce yeh-Oi, tha' was a lil' t'close!"

Whack! Clang!

Gobber, frustrated, just glanced at the couple.

"Jus' kiss!" He said before launching into another charge against two

incoming pirates. They were like flies, always drawn back even when they were nearly downed.

Not needed further instruction, the two dragons sidled up to one another and the two riders shared their sealing kiss. Passionate and heated, it solidified the promises and began the newest chapter of their young lives.

They broke apart and rushed back into battle, now as husband and wife, securing Berk's victory in the battle in one last hurrah.

It was a double celebration that night. The Great Hall was crowded, all existing barrels of mead were rolled out and tapped into. The alcohol splashed around and music and laughter rattled the rafters. Dragons enjoyed flocking the tables, pining for the scrapes which they were happily given. The Terrors sang with the upbeat music.

However, as the Vikings partied in response to their outstanding victory and the blessed union of their two leaders, the said couple were outside on the steps. All the celebration they need was their two dragons keeping an eye out and themselves. They were wrapped in a tight, passionate embrace. Astrid's head snuggled in the crook of his neck, her arms around his waist. His head rested against hers, his nose brushing past her ear. One hand played with the messy ponytail still in her hair and the other held her waist.

They were swaying to their own rhythm, in companionable silence, until Astrid, who tried to stop herself, giggled.

"And what's so funny, milady?" Hiccup questioned with curiosity. Astrid just slightly lifted her head from her husband's shoulder.

"Justâ€¦we always seem to fail at following traditions." Astrid pointed out. Hiccup shook his head.

"Quite the contrary," he whispered in her ear. It was hot, desirable and enduring to his wife. "Gothi made the prayer, we traded our swords and rings, we spoke our vows and sealed everything with a kiss."

To emphasize his point, he bowed his head and pressed a quick, fervent kiss upon her inviting lips. He pulled away and placed his forehead against hers. Their breaths entangled with each other, noses brushing against the other and eyes closed to embrace their sweet solace.

"The one time, you are right." Astrid joked, lovingly as she reached up to stroke her husband's cheek. Hiccup grinned and kissed her palm.

"I must sayâ€¦we followed enough wedding traditions today with our little flair," he chuckled. Astrid smiled and he suddenly reached down and picked her up in a bridal carry. He started to walk down the steps with surprising grace. "Shall weâ€¦defy tradition and have our own little celebration elsewhere, with no eyes to see?"

Astrid only smiled, placed her arms around her husband's neck. Hiccup mounted on Toothless, Astrid sitting in front of him. His arms

wrapped tightly around her as his prosthetic clicked into place. The two shared one more kiss and one more long, tender look. Hiccup glanced down at Toothless.

"Right bud, to Itchy Armpit."

The end.

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